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OLIVER TWIST

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by

CHARLES DICKENS

*Simplified and brought within the vocabulary of
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MARGARET MAISON

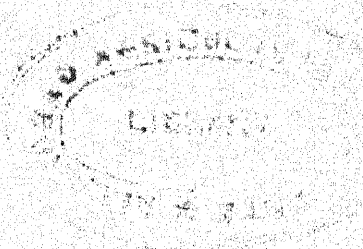
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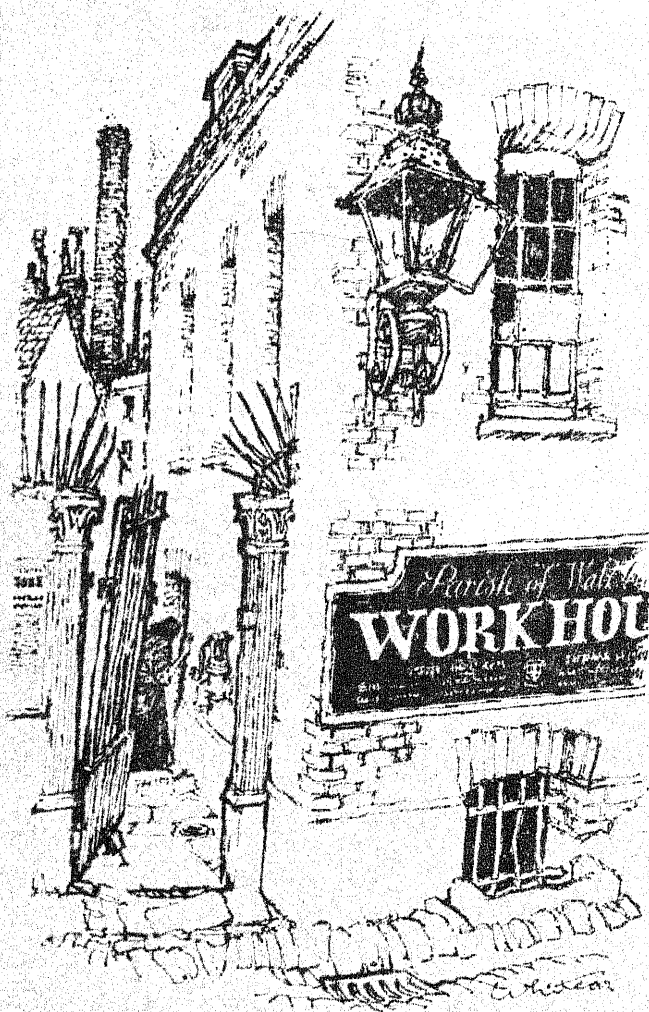
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Oliver Twist was born in a workhouse

One

OLIVER'S EARLY LIFE

A. Among other buildings in a certain town, there is a house for poor people. They go there when they have no money and nowhere to live. It is called a *workhouse*.

Oliver Twist was born here. His mother, a young woman, lay ill in bed. A doctor and an old woman stood by her side.

"Let me see the child, and die," she said.

"Oh, you must not talk about dying yet," said the doctor.

"No, dear," said the old woman. "You are too young to die."

The young woman shook her head and held out her hand towards the child.

The doctor put the child in her arms. She pressed her cold white lips to its face, and then fell back—and died.

"She's dead," said the doctor.

"Yes, poor dear," said the old woman, as she took the child away from its dead mother. "Poor dear."

"She was a good-looking girl," said the doctor, as he put on his hat and gloves. "Where did she come from?"

"She was brought here last night," said the old woman.

"She was lying in the street. She had walked a long way and her shoes were worn out. Nobody knows where she came from, or where she was going to."

The doctor raised the dead woman's left hand.

"The old story," he said. "I see that she has no ring on her finger! She was not married. Good night!"

He went home to his dinner. The old woman sat down on a chair in front of the fire and began to dress the baby. She dressed him in the very old clothes used for a baby born in the workhouse—a poor child without father or mother, born into a world which had no love or pity for him.

B. Later Oliver was sent to another house where twenty or thirty other poor children lived. An old woman called Mrs Mann looked after these children. She was given a few pennies every week to look after each child, but she kept most of the money for herself. The children had very little food; many of them died.

Oliver did not die, but he was white and thin and always hungry.

On the day when he was nine years old, he and two other boys told Mrs Mann that they were hungry. Mrs Mann beat them and put them in a dark room.

While they were there Mr Bumble, an important officer from the workhouse, came to visit Mrs Mann.

"I have come on business," said Mr Bumble. "The child that was named Oliver Twist is nine years old today, is he not?"

"He is—the dear boy," said Mrs Mann, giving Mr Bumble a drink. "All my children are dear children."

"We have never found Oliver's father," said Mr Bumble, "and we know nothing at all about his mother."

"How has he got a name then?" asked Mrs Mann.

"I gave him his name," said Mr Bumble

"You, Mr Bumble?"

"I, Mrs Mann. We name children in the order of letters. The last one was an S—I named him Swubble. This was a T and I named him Twist. The next one who comes will be

Unwin. I have got names ready to Z, and then all the way through again from A."

"You are a very learned gentleman," said Mrs Mann.

Mr Bumble was pleased. He finished his drink.

"Now to business," he said. "Oliver Twist is now too old to stay here. We have decided to have him back in the workhouse. I have come to take him there. So let me see him at once, if you please."

"I'll bring him to you now," said Mrs Mann.

C. Mrs Mann took Oliver from the dark room, washed his face and hands quickly and led him to Mr Bumble.

"Will you come with me, Oliver?" said Mr Bumble.

Oliver began to say that he would go anywhere with pleasure. But he suddenly saw Mrs Mann's face. She was standing behind Mr Bumble and she gave Oliver a nasty look. The boy understood at once.

"Can Mrs Mann come with me?" he asked.

"No, she can't," replied Mr Bumble. "But she'll come and visit you sometimes."

Although he was so young, Oliver was wise enough to pretend to be sorry at leaving Mrs Mann. He began to cry. It was not difficult for him to cry, for he was weak and hungry.

Mrs Mann gave him a lot of kisses and also—more important—a piece of bread and butter, so that he would not appear too hungry when he got to the workhouse.

So Mr Bumble took him away from the home where he had spent his early years and where he had never known a kind word or a kind look. He took him back to the workhouse where he was born.

Two

OLIVER ASKS FOR MORE

A. Oliver was even less happy in the workhouse. He now had to work, which made him hungrier than ever. He had only three meals of thin *soup* every day: the soup was made by boiling very little meat and a lot of other things in a lot of water. He had a small piece of bread on Sundays.

The room in which the boys were fed was a big hall. A large pot stood at one end. When it was time for meals, a master served the soup from the pot to the boys. He was helped by one or two women servants.

Each boy had one small bowl of soup and no more. The bowls never needed washing. The boys cleaned them with their spoons until they shone. When the boys had eaten their soup and cleaned their bowls they sat looking at the pot with eager eyes as if they could have eaten all the soup in it.

Oliver Twist and his friends suffered from this terrible hunger for three months. At last they grew so wild with hunger that one boy, who was tall for his age, told the others that, unless he had another bowl of soup every day, he might some night eat the boy who slept next to him.

He had an eager, hungry eye, and the other boys believed what he said. So they talked together, and they chose a boy to walk up to the master after supper and ask for more. The boy chosen was Oliver Twist.

B. The evening arrived and the boys took their places.



A master served the soup from the pot to the boys

The master stood by the pot; the servants stood near him, and the soup was served.

It disappeared quickly. The boys whispered to one another, and made signs to Oliver. His neighbours pushed him. Although he was only a child he was wild with hunger, and this gave him courage.

He rose from the table and went to the master, with his bowl and spoon in his hand. Almost afraid of his own courage, he said, "Please, sir, I want some more."

The master was a fat, healthy man, but he turned very white. He looked with surprise at the small boy. The servants were silent with surprise, and the boys were silent with fear.

"What?" said the master at length in a faint voice.

"Please, sir," said Oliver, "I want some more."

The master hit Oliver with his spoon, then seized him in his arms and cried for help. Mr Bumble and some of the workhouse officers came rushing into the room. The master told them what Oliver had said.

"He asked for more!" they cried. "Do we understand that he wanted more than his usual supper?"

They could hardly believe it.

"That boy will live to be hanged!" cried one of them.

They took Oliver away and shut him up in a dark room. The next morning a notice appeared on the gate of the workhouse. This notice offered five pounds to anybody who would take Oliver Twist.

"I am sure that that boy will live to be hanged!" cried one of the workhouse officers again.

C. Oliver was a prisoner in that dark room for a whole week. The weather was cold. Every morning he was taken to wash in the yard, and Mr Bumble beat him

with a stick. Every other day he was taken into the hall where the boys had their soup, and Mr Bumble beat him in front of everybody. He cried all day and could not sleep at night.

Nobody came to pay five pounds for him, and Mr Bumble decided to arrange for him to go to sea, and work on a ship.



Coffin

But one day outside the workhouse gate, Mr Bumble met Mr Sowerberry. Mr Sowerberry was a tall thin man and he wore an old black suit. He made *coffins*—boxes in which dead bodies were put. Many of his coffins were

for the poor people who died in the workhouse.

"I have prepared the coffins for the two women who died last night," said Mr Sowerberry to Mr Bumble.

"I'm sure that you make a lot of money from your work," said Mr Bumble.

"Do you think so?" said Mr Sowerberry. "The prices allowed by the workhouse are very small, Mr Bumble."

"So are the coffins," said Mr Bumble.

Mr Sowerberry was very amused at this, and laughed for a long time without stopping.

"Well, well, Mr Bumble," he said. "It's the food which people eat in the workhouse that helps to make the coffins so narrow and small. But the wood for the coffins costs a lot. And often the fat people die the quickest. Then I have to make a bigger coffin, and I don't make so much money."

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"By the way," said Mr Bumble, "you don't know anybody who wants a boy, do you? For five pounds." He raised his stick and pointed to the notice on the gate.

"That's just the very thing I wanted to speak to you about," said Mr Sowerberry. "I do a lot to help the poor people, so I think I've a right to get something from them. I think I'll take the boy myself."

Three

HE GOES OUT TO WORK

A. It was soon arranged for Oliver to start work with Mr Sowerberry. Mr Bumble took him to the shop that evening. Oliver began to cry. He felt so unhappy, and was certain that everybody hated him.

Mr Sowerberry had closed the shop, and was writing by the light of a very poor *candle* (a light made of wax with a string in it).

"Here, Mr Sowerberry, I've brought the boy," said Mr Bumble.

Oliver bowed.

"Oh, that's the boy, is it?" said Mr Sowerberry, raising the candle above his head to get a better view of Oliver. "Mrs Sowerberry, will you be good enough to come here a moment, my dear?"

A short thin woman with a face like a fox came out from a little room behind the shop.

"My dear," said Mr Sowerberry, "this is the boy from the workhouse that I told you about."

Oliver bowed again.

"Oh dear!" said the woman. "He's very small."

"Why, he is rather small!" said Mr Bumble, looking at



Mr. Zouphrey was lighting by the light of a foot candle

Oliver as if it were the boy's fault that he was no bigger. "He is small. That's true. But he'll grow, Mrs Sowerberry—he'll grow."

"Yes I expect he will," said the lady angrily, "on *our* food and *our* drink. These children cost a lot of money to keep. Here, get downstairs, you little bag of bones."

She opened a side door and pushed Oliver down some steep stairs into a dark room which was used as a kitchen. A girl sat there. She was wearing old shoes and clothes with holes in them.

"Here, Charlotte," said Mrs Sowerberry, who had followed Oliver down the stairs, "give this boy some of those bits of cold meat which we'd saved for the dog. The dog hasn't come home since this morning, so it won't have them."

Oliver's eyes shone at the thought of meat. They gave him a plate of the dog's food. He ate it all very quickly.

Mrs Sowerberry watched him. She was not pleased to see how eager he was to eat.

"Come with me," she said, taking a dirty lamp and leading the way upstairs. "Your bed is in the shop. You don't mind sleeping among the coffins, I suppose? But it doesn't much matter whether you do or you don't, for you can't sleep anywhere else. Come along. Don't keep me here all night."

B. When Oliver was alone in the shop he was very much afraid. There was a half-finished coffin which looked like death and filled him with terror. Pieces of wood stood against the wall like ghosts. The shop was hot and the air seemed full of the smell of coffins. His bed looked like a grave.

There he was—alone in a strange place, with no friends,

no one to love or take care of him. His heart was heavy. He wished, as he went to his narrow bed, that it really were his coffin and that he could sleep there for ever.

The next morning he heard a loud knocking noise outside the shop door. This noise was repeated angrily about twenty-five times.

"Open the door, will you?" cried a voice.

"I will at once, sir," replied Oliver, turning the key.

"I suppose you're the new boy, aren't you?" said the voice.

"Yes, sir," said Oliver.

"How old are you?"

"Ten, sir."

"Then I'm going to beat you when I get in," said the voice.

Oliver opened the door. He saw nobody but a big boy sitting in front of the house, eating bread and butter. He had small eyes and a red nose.

"Did you knock?" asked Oliver.

"I did."

"Did you want a coffin?" said Oliver.

"You don't know who I am, I suppose, Workhouse?" said the boy.

"No, sir," replied Oliver.

"I'm Mr Noah Claypole," said the boy, "and you will work under me. Open the windows at once, you lazy creature." And with these words he hit Oliver and went into the shop.

C. Mr and Mrs Sowerberry came down soon afterwards. Oliver followed Noah Claypole into the kitchen to have breakfast.

"Come near the fire, Noah," said Charlotte. "I've saved

a nice little bit of meat for you from master's breakfast. Oliver, shut that door behind Mr Noah, and take those bits I've put out for you. There's your tea. Take it to that box over there. Hurry up, for they want you to mind the shop. Do you hear?"

"Do you hear, Workhouse?" said Noah Claypole.

"Oh, Noah!" said Charlotte. "Why do you call him that? You are funny! Why don't you let him alone?"

"Let him alone!" said Noah. "Everybody lets him alone. His father and his mother both let him alone—and all his family too. Isn't that so, Charlotte?"

"Oh, you funny boy!" said the girl, laughing.

Noah began to laugh, too, and they both looked at poor Oliver Twist as he sat on the box in the coldest corner of the room eating old, hard pieces of bread.

Noah was a poor boy, but not from the workhouse. He knew who his parents were—his mother washed clothes and his father was a soldier who drank too much. Other boys were rude to him, so he was glad that Oliver had come because now he in turn could be rude to Oliver.

FOUR

HE RUNS AWAY

A. During the months which followed Oliver learned a great deal. He went with Mr Sowerberry on his business journeys, and he helped him at *funerals*, when the coffins were put in the ground.

Oliver noticed that, at the funerals of very rich people, families who were sad when these people were alive, were often happy after their death. Husbands seemed calm over the loss of their wives. Wives wore black for their husbands'

funerals, but they liked to look as pretty as possible in these clothes. Oliver saw too that people whose sorrow was very great during the funeral got better very quickly as soon as they reached home and drank tea.

During this time too Noah Claypole made life very unpleasant for Oliver. Because Noah behaved like this, Charlotte was bad to Oliver too; and because Mr Sowerberry tried to be his friend Mrs Sowerberry was his enemy. So, with three people against him, Oliver's life was not very comfortable.

B. One day Noah was very bad to Oliver. He pulled his hair hard and hurt his ears. He was trying to make Oliver cry.

"How's your mother, Workhouse?" he said.

"She's dead," replied Oliver. "Don't you say anything about her to me."

Oliver's colour rose as he said this. He breathed quickly.

"What did she die of, Workhouse?" said Noah.

"Of a broken heart, I was told," said Oliver. "She was too unhappy to want to go on living. I think I know what it must be to die of that."

"What's made you cry?" said Noah, looking very pleased as he saw the tears in Oliver's eyes.

"Not you," replied Oliver.

"Oh, not me—really?" laughed Noah.

"No, not you. Now that's enough. Don't say anything more to me about my mother. You'd better not."

"Better not! Better not!" cried Noah. "Don't be rude, Workhouse. We all pity you, Workhouse, but your mother was a bad woman. You know that she was!"

"What did you say?" asked Oliver, looking up quickly.

"A bad woman, Workhouse," repeated Noah. "And it

was a good thing that she died when she did," he added.

Red with anger, Oliver pushed over the chair and table, seized Noah by the neck, shook him and then threw him to the ground.

C. A minute ago, Oliver seemed so quiet and calm, but the bad words about his mother set his blood on fire.

Noah lay at his feet crying in a loud voice.

"He'll murder me! Help! Charlotte. Mrs Sowerberry! Oliver has gone mad!"

Charlotte gave a loud cry as she and Mrs Sowerberry came rushing into the kitchen.

"Oh, you bad boy!" shouted Charlotte, seizing Oliver and hitting him.

Mrs Sowerberry held Oliver and scratched his face. Noah got up and hit him from behind. When they were all tired and could tear and scratch and beat no longer they carried Oliver to a dark room and shut him in there.

Mrs Sowerberry sat down and began to cry.

"We might all have been murdered in our beds," she said.

"I hope this will teach Mr Sowerberry not to have any more boys from the workhouse," said Charlotte. "They are all born to murder and to steal. Poor Noah! He was nearly killed, Mrs Sowerberry."

"Poor Noah!" said Mrs Sowerberry. "But what's to be done? Mr Sowerberry is not at home. There's no man in the house."

"Shall we send for the police?" cried Charlotte.

"No," said Mrs Sowerberry. "Run to Mr Bumble, Noah, and tell him to come here at once."

D. Noah found Mr Bumble at the workhouse.

"Oh, Mr Bumble, sir!" cried Noah "Oliver, sir, Oliver has——"

"What? What?" asked Mr Bumble with a look of pleasure in his eyes. "Not run away; he hasn't run away, has he, Noah?"

"Not run away, sir, but he's attacked me and tried to murder me, sir. And then he tried to murder Charlotte, and then Mrs Sowerberry, sir. Oh, the terrible pain!" And Noah moved his body as if still suffering from Oliver's attack.

"My poor boy," said Mr Bumble. "I'll come at once."

He took his stick and set off with Noah to Mr Sowerberry's shop. He went to the dark room and said in a deep voice:

"Oliver!"

"Let me out!" cried Oliver from the inside.

"Do you know this voice, Oliver?" asked Mr Bumble.

"Yes," answered Oliver.

"Aren't you afraid of it? Have you no fear while I speak?"

"No!" said Oliver in a courageous voice.

This answer was so different from the one which he expected to receive. Mr Bumble was very surprised. He stood back from the door and looked at the others.

"Oh, you know, Mr Bumble, he must be mad," said Mrs Sowerberry. "No good boy could speak to you like that."

"He is not mad," said Mr Bumble after a few moments' deep thought. "The trouble is—Meat!"

"What?" said Mrs Sowerberry.

"Meat, Mrs Sowerberry, meat," said Mr Bumble. "You have given him too much to eat. If you had fed him only on soup, as we did in the workhouse, this would never have happened."

"Dear, dear!" said Mrs Sowerberry. "This is the result of being generous."

"Leave him in there for a day or two," said Mr Bumble. "Give him nothing but soup in future, Mrs Sowerberry. He comes of a bad family."

E. At this moment Mr Sowerberry arrived. The others explained to him what Oliver had done. He opened the door and pulled Oliver out. Oliver's clothes were torn, his face was scratched, his hair was wild and he still looked red and angry.

"Now, you're a nice boy, aren't you?" said Mr Sowerberry, hitting him on the ear.

"Noah called my mother names," said Oliver.

"What if he did?" said Mrs Sowerberry, "She deserved what he said, and worse."

"She didn't," said Oliver.

"She did," said Mrs Sowerberry.

"That's not true," said Oliver.

Mrs Sowerberry burst into tears.

Mr Sowerberry wanted to be kind to Oliver, but when his wife began to cry he felt forced to beat Oliver. He hit him hard and then shut him up in the dark room again. At night he was ordered upstairs to his bed in the shop.

It was not until he was left alone in the silence of the shop that Oliver began to cry. He fell on his knees on the floor and, hiding his face in his hands, he wept.

For a long time he stayed like that, without moving. His candle was burning low. Then he opened the door and looked out. It was a cold, dark night. He shut the door, tied up his few clothes in a handkerchief, and sat down to wait for morning.

When the first light of day showed through the

· windows he arose and again opened the door. After one quick frightened look around him he closed the door behind him and was out in the open street.

Five

HE GOES TO LONDON

A. Oliver looked to the right and to the left, not knowing where to go. He remembered seeing the carts, as they left the town, going up the hill. He took the same road.

His way lay in front of Mrs Mann's house. His heart beat quickly when he saw this, but he did not want to turn back. Besides, it was so early that there was very little fear of his being seen.

He reached the house. It was all quiet. He stopped and looked into the garden. A child was working there. It was one of the workhouse boys, an old friend. Oliver felt glad to see him. They had been beaten and shut up together many a time.

"Quiet, Dick," said Oliver, as the boy ran to the gate. "Is anyone up?"

"Nobody but me," replied the child.

"You mustn't say you saw me, Dick," said Oliver. "I am running away. They have beaten me and treated me so terribly. I am going away. How ill you look, Dick!"

"I heard the doctor tell them I was dying," said the child with a faint smile. "I'm very glad to see you, Oliver, but don't stop, don't stop."

"Yes, yes, I'll stop to say goodbye to you, Dick," said Oliver. "And I know I shall see you again. You will be well and happy, Dick."

"I hope so," replied the child. "After I am dead, but

not before. I know the doctor must be right, Oliver, because I dream so much of heaven and kind faces that I never see when I am awake. Kiss me," said the child, climbing up the low gate and throwing his little arms round Oliver's neck. "Goodbye! God bless you!"

It was the first time that anyone had ever asked God to bless Oliver, and, through all the troubles and changes of his later life, he never once forgot it.

B. Oliver ran on, afraid that he might be followed and caught. Then he sat down by a stone and began to think, for the first time, where he ought to go and how he ought to live.

The stone was marked to show that it was just seventy miles from that spot to London. London! That great big place! Nobody, not even Mr Bumble, could find him there.

He jumped to his feet. How could he get there? He had a piece of dry bread, an old shirt and two pairs of socks, all tied up in his handkerchief. He had a penny too.

"But these will not help me to walk seventy miles in the winter time," he thought.

He walked twenty miles that day. All the time he ate nothing but the piece of dry bread, and had a few drinks of water which he had begged from the doors of houses. When night came he slept in a field. He was frightened at first, and very cold and hungry. The wind howled all the time. Being very tired, however, he soon fell asleep and forgot his troubles.

Next morning he was cold and he was so hungry that he had to spend his penny on bread. He had walked no more than twelve miles when night closed in again. Another night in the cold air made him worse. His feet hurt and his legs felt weak. He could hardly walk.

As the days passed he grew weaker. A man gave him a meal of bread and cheese, and an old lady gave him food and some kind words. Without this Oliver's troubles would have ended in the same way as his mother's: he would have fallen dead on the road.

Early on the seventh morning Oliver walked slowly into the little town of Barnet, a few miles from London. The sun was rising in all its beauty. The streets were empty. Oliver sat on a door-step. He was covered in dust, and there was blood on his feet.

C. People began to pass. Some of them stopped to look at Oliver for a while, but no one spoke to him. Then he saw a boy looking at him. The boy walked up to Oliver. "Hullo! What's the trouble?"

He was a strange boy: very dirty, short and with ugly eyes. He was about Oliver's age but he had all the airs of a man. He wore a man's coat, which reached nearly to his feet, and a man's hat, which looked as if it would fall off at any moment.

"What is it?" he asked Oliver.

"I am very hungry and tired," said Oliver. "I have walked a long way. I have been walking these seven days." The tears rose to his eyes.

"Seven days!" said the boy. "Oh, I see! You need food and you shall have it. I haven't much money but I'll pay for you. Up you get!"

He helped him to rise and took him to an inn where he bought some meat and bread and something to drink. Oliver had a good meal with his new friend.

"Going to London?" said the strange boy, when Oliver had at length finished.

"Yes."



The boy walked up to Oliver

"Have you got anywhere to stay?"

"No."

"Money?"

"No. Do you live in London?" said Oliver.

"Yes, I do, when I'm at home. I suppose you want somewhere to sleep tonight, don't you?"

"I do indeed," answered Oliver. "I haven't slept under a roof for a long time."

"Don't trouble yourself any more about it," said the boy. "I've got to be in London tonight and I know an old gentleman who will give you a bed for nothing. He knows me very well."

Oliver found that the boy's name was Jack Dawkins. Jack refused to enter London before dark, so it was nearly eleven o'clock before they reached the city. He walked fast and Oliver followed him down a narrow street into one of the dirtiest places he had ever seen. The air was full of bad smells, and the road full of men and women who had drunk too much.

Oliver began to think that he ought to run away, when suddenly Dawkins, catching him by the arm, pushed open the door of a house and they both went inside.

D. It was dark, but Oliver could see a man's face looking over the broken stairs.

"There's two of you!" he said. "Who's the other one?"

"A new friend," said Jack Dawkins, pulling Oliver forward. "Is Fagin upstairs?"

"Yes, he's busy with the handkerchiefs. Up you go."

Dawkins took Oliver's hand and helped him, with much difficulty, up the dark and broken stairs. He threw open the door of a room and drew Oliver in after him.

The walls of the room were completely black with age

and dirt. There was a table in front of the fire. On it there was a candle, stuck in a bottle, two or three cups, a loaf of bread, some butter and a plate. Some meat was cooking over the fire.

There was a very old man standing by the fire. His name was Fagin. He was dressed in dirty clothes and his evil-looking face was half hidden by his red hair. He seemed to be dividing his attention between the meat and a line on which a large number of silk handkerchiefs was hanging. Several rough beds were placed side by side on the floor. Four or five boys were sitting round the table. They were smoking long pipes and drinking with the air of middle-aged men. They crowded round Dawkins as he whispered a few words to the old man. Then they turned round and smiled at Oliver. So did the old man.

"This is the boy, Fagin," said Jack Dawkins. "This is Oliver Twist."

The old man smiled again and bowed. Then he took Oliver by the hand and said that he hoped to have the honour of his friendship. Then the young men with the pipes came round and shook both Oliver's hands very hard, especially the hand in which he held his handkerchief. One young man was anxious to hang up his cap for him and another put his hands in Oliver's pockets to save Oliver the trouble of emptying them before he went to bed.

"We are very glad to see you, Oliver," said Fagin. "Ah, you're looking at all those pocket handkerchiefs. We've just got them ready to wash. That's all, Oliver, that's all. Ha! ha! ha!"

The boys all laughed at this, and they began to have their supper. Oliver ate with them; afterwards they gave him a bed on the floor and he fell into a deep sleep.

Six

FAGIN AND COMPANY

A. It was late next morning when Oliver awoke from a long sleep. There was nobody in the room but the old man, who was making some coffee for breakfast. When the coffee was made he turned round and looked at Oliver and called him by name. Oliver was only half awake and did not answer.

Fagin thought that Oliver was still asleep. He locked the door and then he drew out a box from a secret hole in the floor. He placed the box carefully on the table. He then sat down and took from the box a splendid gold watch, bright with jewels.

"Ah!" he said with an ugly smile. "Fine fellows! Fine fellows! Faithful to the end! They never said a word about Fagin. Why should they? It would not have saved them from hanging. No! Fine fellows!"

He put the watch back and took out at least six more watches. He looked at these with equal pleasure. There were also some beautiful rings and other splendid jewels in the box.

"What a wonderful idea it is to hang men!" he said aloud to himself. "Dead men can never be sorry. Dead men can never talk. Ah, it's fine for our business! Five of them hanging in a line and not one left to tell the story of these jewels!"

As he said these words, his bright dark eyes fell on Oliver's face. The boy's eyes were fixed on his in silent curiosity. Fagin knew that Oliver had seen what he was

doing. He shut the box quickly, took a bread knife from the table and went over to Oliver.

"Why are you awake? What have you seen? Speak out, boy! Quick—quick! For your life!"

"I wasn't able to sleep any longer, sir," said Oliver. "I am very sorry if I have troubled you. I have only just woken up."

"Did you see any of these pretty things?" said Fagin.

"Yes, sir."

"Ah!" said Fagin, putting down the knife. "They're mine, Oliver. All I have to live on in my old age."

B. At that moment Jack Dawkins came in, with another boy called Charley Bates.

"Well, my dears," said Fagin, "I hope you've been at work this morning."

"Hard," said Dawkins.

"Very hard," said Charley Bates.

"Good boys, good boys!" said Fagin. "What have you got, Dawkins?"

"Two bags of money," said Dawkins, and he gave the two bags to Fagin.

"Not so heavy as they might be," said the old man, "but well made. He's good at his work, isn't he, Oliver?"

"Very good," said Oliver, and Charley Bates laughed, much to Oliver's surprise. He could see nothing to laugh at.

"And what have you got?" said Fagin to Charley.

"Handkerchiefs," replied Master Bates, producing four.

"Well," said Fagin, looking at them carefully. "They're good ones but you haven't marked them well, Charley. So the marks shall be taken out with a needle and we'll

teach Oliver how to do it. Shall we, Oliver? Ha! ha! ha!"

"If you please, sir," said Oliver.

"You would like to be able to take pocket handkerchiefs as well as Charley does, wouldn't you, my dear?"

"Very much, if you'll teach me, sir," said Oliver, and Charley Bates laughed again.

C. After breakfast the old gentleman and the two boys played a very strange game. The old man placed a silver box in one pocket of his trousers, a bag of money in the other, and a watch and a handkerchief in his coat pocket.

He then walked round and round the room with a stick, just as old gentlemen walk in the streets. Sometimes he stopped at the door, pretending to look at a shop window. Then he looked round, for fear of thieves. He kept touching his pockets to see if he hadn't lost anything. He did this in such a funny way that Oliver laughed till the tears came to his eyes.

All this time the two boys followed close behind Fagin. They got out of his sight very quickly when he turned round. At last Dawkins stepped on Fagin's foot, while Charley Bates pushed against him from behind. In that one moment they quickly took from him the silver box, bag of money, watch and handkerchief. If the old gentleman felt a hand in any one of his pockets he cried out where it was; and then the game began all over again.

When they had played this game a great many times two young ladies called to see the young gentlemen. One of them was called Bet and the other Nancy. They had a great deal of colour in their faces, and their manners were very free and easy. Oliver thought them very nice girls indeed. They went out with Dawkins and Charley Bates.

"There, my dear," said Fagin to Oliver. "They've gone



*At last Dawkins stepped on Fagin's foot, while Charley Bates
• pushed against him from behind*

out for the day. They lead a very pleasant life, don't they?"

"Have they finished work, sir?" asked Oliver.

"Yes," said Fagin, "unless they find some work to do while they are out. Do as they do, Oliver. They will be great men one day, and they can help you to be a great man too. Is my handkerchief hanging out of my pocket?"

"Yes, sir," said Oliver.

"See if you can take it out without my feeling it, as you saw them do when we were playing this morning."

Oliver held up the bottom of the pocket with one hand, as he had seen the Dodger hold it, and drew the handkerchief out of it with the other.

"Is it gone?" cried Fagin.

"Here it is, sir," said Oliver, showing it in his hand.

"You're a good boy, my dear," said Fagin. "Here's a shilling for you. If you go on in this way you'll be the greatest man of the time. And now come here, and I'll show you how to take the marks out of the handkerchiefs."

Oliver could not understand how this game could help him to become a great man, but he was not yet ten years old, and thought that Fagin, being so much older, must know best.

Seven

OLIVER JOINS THE THIEVES

A. Day after day Oliver stayed in Fagin's room, taking the marks out of the handkerchiefs. Sometimes too he played the game already described. At last he began to want fresh air and he begged Fagin to let him go out to work with Dawkins and Charley Bates.

One morning the old gentleman allowed him to go. The

three boys set out, walking very slowly. Oliver wondered if they were going to work at all.

Suddenly Dawkins stopped. Laying his finger on his lips, he drew his friends back with great care.

"What's the matter?" asked Oliver.

"Quiet!" replied Dawkins. "Do you see that old man near the bookshop?"

"The old gentleman over there?" said Oliver. "Yes, I see him."

"He'll do," said Dawkins.

"Perfect," said Charley Bates.

Oliver looked at them in surprise. The two boys walked across the road and came close behind the old gentleman. Oliver followed them, not knowing what to do.

The old gentleman had white hair and gold glasses. He wore a green coat and carried a stick. He had taken a book from a shelf in front of the shop and he stood reading it with great interest.

To Oliver's surprise and alarm, Dawkins put his hand into the old man's pocket and took out a handkerchief. He gave it to Charley Bates and they both ran away quickly round the corner.

At once Oliver understood the mystery of the handkerchiefs and the watches and the jewels and Fagin's games. He stood still for a moment, full of fright and terror, and then he too began to run.

At that moment the old gentleman put his hand in his pocket and, missing his handkerchief, turned round. He saw Oliver running away and thought of course that the boy had stolen his handkerchief.

"Stop, thief!" he shouted, and ran after Oliver with his book in his hand.

Everybody in the street joined him in the pursuit. "Stop,

thief!" they cried. Even Dawkins and Master Bates, when they heard the cry, began to shout "Stop, thief!" and run after Oliver too.

B. At last someone hit Oliver and he fell to the ground, covered with dust. There was blood all over his face. A crowd collected.

"Is this the boy?" they asked the old gentleman.

"Yes," said the old gentleman, "I'm afraid it is. Poor boy! He has hurt himself."

An officer of the law made his way through the crowd and seized Oliver by the neck.

"Come, get up!" he said.

"It wasn't me, sir. It was two other boys," said Oliver. "They are here somewhere."

"Oh, no, they're not," said the officer. This was true, for Dawkins and Charley Bates had run off down the first street. "Come, get up!"

"Don't hurt him," said the old gentleman.

The officer of the law began to pull Oliver along the street. Suddenly a man, dressed in an old black suit, came towards them.

"Stop, stop! Don't take him away!" he cried. "Stop a moment!"

"What is this? Who are you?" said the officer.

"I own the bookshop," replied the man, "and I saw what happened. There were three boys—two others and this one. Mr Brownlow was reading and another boy took his handkerchief. This boy did nothing. He stood still and looked surprised."

"Then the boy must go free," said the officer of the law. He let go of Oliver's neck and at once the boy fell down in a faint, his face as white as death.

"Poor boy, poor boy!" said Mr Brownlow, the old gentleman. "Call a carriage, somebody, please. At once!"

A carriage came. Oliver was placed on one of the seats. The old gentleman got in and sat beside him.

They rode away until the carriage stopped in front of a pleasant house in a quiet London street. Oliver was taken into the house and put to bed.

C. When Dawkins and Charley Bates got home Fagin was waiting for them.

"Where's Oliver?" he said with an angry look. "Where's the boy?"

The young thieves looked at him and then at each other, but they said nothing.

"What's happened to that boy?" cried Fagin, seizing Dawkins. "Speak out or I'll kill you!"

"An officer of the law took him away," answered Dawkins. "Let go of me!"

He broke free and took a knife from the table. Fagin picked up a cup and threw it at Dawkins's head. It missed him and nearly hit a man who was entering the room at that moment.

"Who threw that at me?" said the man in a deep voice. He was a strong fellow of about thirty-five, with dirty clothes and angry eyes. His name was Bill Sikes. A white dog, with its face scratched and torn in twenty different places, followed him into the room.

"What are you doing to those boys, Fagin?" said Bill Sikes. "I'm surprised they don't murder you."

"Quiet, Mr Sikes," said Fagin. "Don't speak so loud. You seem angry today."

"Perhaps I am," said Bill Sikes. "Give me a drink, Fagin."

While Sikes was drinking, Dawkins told them about Oliver and how he had been caught.

"I'm afraid," said Fagin, "that the boy may tell the officer of the law all about us and get us into trouble. We must find him."

"Yes, somebody must find him," said Bill Sikes.

The thieves sat thinking hard and looking at one another. Then the door opened and the two young ladies, Bet and Nancy, came in.

D. "The very thing!" said Fagin. "Bet will go, won't you, my dear?"

"Where?" said Bet.

"To the officer of the law—to find where Oliver is. He's been taken away and we must get him back."

"Nothing would make me go!" said Bet.

"Nancy, my dear," said Fagin. "What would you say?"

"No," said Nancy.

"She'll go, Fagin," said Sikes.

"No, she won't, Fagin," said Nancy.

"Yes, she will, Fagin," said Sikes.

At last Nancy agreed to go to look for Oliver. She put on clean clothes and carried a little basket. She looked very good and sweet.

"Oh, my brother, Oliver! My poor dear little brother, Oliver!" cried Nancy, pretending to weep. "What has happened to him? Where have they taken him? Oh, do have pity and tell me what's been done with the dear boy!"

"Very good!" said Fagin and Bill Sikes. "You're a fine girl, Nancy. Go and see the officer of the law now."

When Nancy returned she told them what had happened to Oliver.

"A gentleman has got him," she said. "A gentleman

called Mr Brownlow—the man whose handkerchief Dawkins took. But they don't know where he lives."

"He must be found!" cried Fagin. "Charley, you must watch that bookshop every day. Nancy, my dear, we must find Oliver. Here's money for you. I shall shut up this house at once. It's no longer safe here. You know where to find me. Don't stop here a minute longer, my dears. And find Oliver. Find him, I say!"

With these words he pushed them from the room. He then took the box which Oliver had seen, put it under his coat and left the house.

Eight

HE FINDS A BETTER HOME

A. Oliver stayed in Mr Brownlow's house. He was ill and he lay in bed for several weeks. When he was a little better he was able to sit in a chair and talk to Mrs Bedwin, an old lady who looked after the house for Mr Brownlow.

His new friends were very kind to him. Mr Brownlow gave him new clothes and a new pair of shoes. Mrs Bedwin fed him with good food and soup which was strong enough to provide meals for three hundred and fifty boys in the workhouse, if enough water was added to it.

One day he sat in Mrs Bedwin's room, eating his supper and he noticed a picture on the wall. It was the picture of a lady. He looked at it for a long time.

"Are you fond of pictures, dear?" said Mrs Bedwin.

"I don't quite know," said Oliver. "I have seen so few that I hardly know. What a beautiful face that lady has!"

"Ah," said Mrs Bedwin. "Artists always make ladies look prettier than they are."

"Whose picture is it?" asked Oliver.

"Why, I don't know," said Mrs Bedwin. "Does it interest you, Oliver?"

"It's so very pretty," said Oliver.

"Are you sure you're not afraid of it?" said Mrs Bedwin, as she saw, with great surprise, that Oliver regarded the picture with a look of fear on his face.

"Oh, no, no!" replied Oliver quickly. "But the eyes look so sad and, wherever I sit, they seem fixed upon me. It seems as if the picture were alive and wanted to speak to me, but couldn't."

"Lord save us!" cried the old lady. "Don't talk in that way, child. You're weak after your illness. Let me move your chair round to the other side and then you won't see it."

Oliver did see it in his mind's eye, but he thought it better not to trouble the kind old lady; so he just smiled and went on eating his supper.

Then Mr Brownlow came down to see him. As they were talking Mr Brownlow looked at the picture.

"Mrs Bedwin!" he cried suddenly. "Look there!" As he spoke he pointed to the picture above Oliver's head and then to the boy's face. The eyes, the head, the mouth—they were the same. Each line of the living face seemed to be just like the other in the picture.

Oliver did not know why Mr Brownlow was shouting like that; but he was not strong enough to bear the surprise which it gave him: he fainted.

B. The next day, when he came down to Mrs Bedwin's room for breakfast, the picture was gone.



"Mrs Bedwin!" he cried suddenly. "Look there!"

"Why have they taken it away?" he asked.

"It seemed to trouble you, child," said Mrs Bedwin. "And Mr Brownlow thought it might stop you getting well; so it has been taken away."

"Oh, no, indeed, it didn't trouble me," said Oliver. "I liked to see it. I quite loved it."

"Well, well," said the old lady. "You must get well as fast as you can, dear, and it shall be hung up again. There! I promise you that! Now let us talk about something else."

Oliver soon grew strong and well. He was very happy in Mr Brownlow's house. One day Mr Brownlow asked him what he wanted to do in the future.

"Please let me stay with you, sir," Oliver said. "Please don't send me away. Let me stay and be a servant in your house."

"You shall stay," said Mr Brownlow, "and I shall never send you away unless you give me cause. But let me hear your story, Oliver. Where did you come from? Who looked after you when you were small? How did you get into the company in which I found you? You are strong enough now to talk to me about it. Tell me the truth, and I shall look after you as long as I live."

Oliver began to cry, and then he started to tell Mr Brownlow all about Mr Bumble and the workhouse. Just then a knock was heard on the door. It was Mr Grimwig, a friend of Mr Brownlow. He had come to tea.

"Shall I go, sir?" said Oliver.

"No, stay here," said Mr Brownlow. "This is young Oliver Twist, the boy I told you about," he said to Mr Grimwig. Oliver bowed.

Mr Grimwig looked at Oliver. He knew that his friend Mr Brownlow had a very kind nature and that any boy found in the street might well deceive him.

"So that's the boy, is it?" he said. "And where does he come from? Who is he? What is he? When are we going to hear the true story of the life and adventures of Oliver Twist?"

"Tomorrow morning," said Mr Brownlow. "Come up to me tomorrow at ten o'clock, Oliver, and we will talk about it all."

"Yes, sir."

"I'll tell you what," whispered Mr Grimwig to Mr Brownlow. "That boy won't come to talk to you about himself tomorrow. You trust people too easily. That boy is deceiving you, my good friend."

"He is not," said Mr Brownlow.

"If he is not," said Mr Grimwig, "I'll eat my head!"

C. At this moment Mrs Bedwin came in with some books.

"These books must go back to the shop this evening, sir," she said "You were going to take them yourself."

"Send Oliver with them," said Mr Grimwig. "If you can trust him, as you say, he will take the books back for you."

"Yes, do let me take them, if you please, sir," said Oliver. "I'll run all the way, sir."

Mr Brownlow did not really want Oliver to go out of the house, but he decided to prove Mr Grimwig wrong and show that Oliver was trustworthy.

"You may go, my dear," he said to Oliver. "Tell the man at the bookshop that you have brought these books back, and that you have come to pay the four pounds ten which I owe him. Here is a five pound note. You must bring me back ten shillings."

"I won't be long, sir," replied Oliver in an eager voice.

He put the money in his pocket and the books under his arm, bowed and left the room.

Mrs Bedwin took him to the door and told him the quickest way.

"Bless his sweet face," she said when he had gone. "Somehow I can't bear to let him out of my sight."

"He'll be back in twenty minutes," said Mr Brownlow.

"Oh, you really expect him to come back, do you?" said Mr Grimwig.

"Don't you?" said Mr Brownlow, smiling.

"No," said Mr Grimwig. "I do not. That boy has new clothes on, good books under his arm and a five pound note in his pocket. He'll join his old friends the thieves, and laugh at you. If ever that boy returns to this house, sir, I'll eat my head!"

With these words he sat down, and the two men waited for Oliver's return.

Nine

BACK AMONG THE THIEVES

A. Oliver walked along until he came near the bookshop. Suddenly he heard a young woman shouting out in a loud voice, "Oh, my dear brother!"

He looked up to see what the matter was, and felt a pair of arms thrown round his neck.

"Let go of me!" he cried. "Who is it? Why are you stopping me?"

"I've found him!" cried the young woman. "Oh, Oliver! Oliver! Oh, you bad boy, to make me suffer so

much. Come home, dear, come home. Thank Heaven I've found you!"

She burst into tears. A crowd began to collect. Two women who were passing by asked her what the matter was.

"He is my brother. He ran away nearly a month ago," replied the young woman. "Our parents are good people. He ran and joined a set of thieves and almost broke his mother's heart."

"Young devil!" said one woman.

"Go home, you evil creature," said the other.

"I am not evil," said Oliver, "and I don't know this girl. I haven't any sister, or father either."

"Just hear his lies!" cried the girl.

"Why, it's Nancy!" said Oliver, seeing her face for the first time.

"You see, he knows me!" cried Nancy to the crowd. "Make him come home to his dear mother and father. Please help me to make him come with me."

"What's this?" cried Bill Sikes, coming out of a shop with his white dog following him. "Young Oliver! Come home to your poor mother, you young fool. Come home at once."

"I don't belong to them. I don't know them. Help! Help!" cried Oliver, as the man seized him.

"Help!" repeated Sikes. "Yes, I'll help you, you young devil. What books are these? You've been stealing again, have you? Give them here."

He tore the books from Oliver's hands and struck him on the head.

"That's right," said someone in the crowd. "That's the only way to teach him."

"It'll do him good," said the two women.

Oliver was too weak to fight. What could one poor child do against all this? He was pulled along the narrow streets.

Night fell. At Mr Brownlow's house Mrs Bedwin stood at the open door. A servant ran up the street twenty times to look for Oliver, and the two old gentlemen sat upstairs, waiting in silence.

B. Nancy and Bill Sikes ran through the streets with Oliver. After half an hour they came to a very dirty narrow street, full of shops which sold old clothes. The dog ran forward and stopped before the door of a shop that was closed and looked empty and deserted.

Sikes rang a bell, the door opened and all three quickly went inside the house. It was dark inside. Sikes pulled Oliver down the stairs and opened the door of a room. They heard a shout of laughter. It was Charley Bates.

"Here he is!" cried Charley. "Oh, Fagin, look at his clothes! And his books too! Quite a perfect gentleman! Oh, I can't stop laughing! Hold me, someone!"

Fagin bowed to Oliver.

"I am glad to see you," he said. "And you are looking so well. Charley will give you another suit, my dear—you must not spoil that Sunday suit. Why didn't you write and say that you were coming? We'd have got something warm for supper."

At that moment Charley drew out the five pound note from Oliver's pocket.

"Hullo! What's that?" said Sikes, stepping forward as Fagin seized the note. "That's mine, Fagin."

"No, no, my dear," said Fagin. "Mine, Bill, mine. You shall have the books."

"If that money isn't mine I'll take the boy back," said Sikes.

"That's not right," said Fagin.

"Right or not," said Bill Sikes. "Nancy and I got the boy for you. Give us that money, you old devil."

With these words he took the note from Fagin's fingers and put it in his handkerchief.

"That's for our work," he said, "And not half enough either. You may keep the books if you're fond of reading. If not, sell them."

"They belong to the old gentleman," said Oliver, falling on his knees at Fagin's feet. "They belong to the good kind old gentleman who took me to his house and looked after me when I was so ill. Please send them back. Send him back the books and the money. He'll think I stole them, and the old lady will think so too. And they were so kind to me. Oh, please send them back!"

"The boy's right," said Fagin. "They will think you have stolen them. Ha, ha!" He laughed and rubbed his hands together. "It couldn't have happened better!"

Oliver now understood what had happened; he jumped quickly to his feet and, shouting for help at the top of his voice, he ran from the room.

C. "Keep back the dog, Bill!" cried Nancy, closing the door as the others rushed after Oliver. "He'll tear the boy to pieces."

"It's what the boy deserves," cried Sikes. "Let me go after him. Keep away from the door, Nancy, or I'll break your head against the wall."

"No! No!" shouted Nancy. "Kill me first but don't let that dog touch the child!"

Bill Sikes threw Nancy to the floor. Just then Fagin and the other boys returned, pulling Oliver along with them.

"What's the matter here?" said Fagin, looking round.



"Keep quiet!" shouted Bill Sikes

"The girl's gone mad, I think," said Sikes.

"No, she hasn't!" said Nancy in a loud voice.

"Then keep quiet, will you?" said Fagin. He turned to Oliver.

"So you wanted to get away, my dear, did you?" he said, taking up a stick which lay in a corner. "You wanted to get help, did you? You meant to send for the police perhaps? We'll soon stop that."

He hit Oliver hard on the shoulder. He was raising the stick for a second blow when Nancy rushed forward, pulled the stick from his hand and threw it into the fire.

"I won't stand by and see it done, Fagin," she cried.

"You've got the boy and what more will you have? Leave him alone."

"Keep quiet!" shouted Bill Sikes.

"If you say much more I shall hurt you," said Fagin to Nancy.

Nancy rushed angrily at Fagin, but Bill Sikes stopped her.

"Women are a great trouble," said Fagin, "but we need them for our work. Charley, take Oliver to bed."

"I suppose he had better not wear his best clothes tomorrow, had he?" asked Charley Bates with a smile.

"Certainly not," said Fagin, returning the smile.

Bates led Oliver into the next room where there were two or three of the beds on which he had slept before. He gave him a dirty old suit and took all his new clothes away from him.

Then, shutting the door behind him, he left Oliver alone in the dark.

Ten

A NEW PLAN

A. Mr Bumble was sitting by the fire, reading a paper, when he had a surprise. He saw a notice saying that Oliver Twist was missing from his home. The notice offered five pounds to anyone who might help to find Oliver. There was a description of Oliver's person and dress, and the name and address of Mr Brownlow at the end.

Mr Bumble went at once to see Mr Brownlow.

"Come in, come in," said Mr Brownlow.

"I knew that we should hear some news of dear Oliver," said Mrs Bedwin. "Bless his heart."

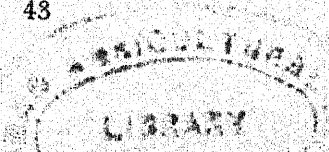
"Do you know where the poor boy is?" asked Mr Brownlow in an anxious voice. "Speak out, my friend and tell us what you know of him."

Mr Bumble put down his hat, and began to speak. He spoke for twenty minutes. He told them that Oliver was born of bad parents and had, from his birth, been evil and unpleasant. He told them how Oliver had attacked Noah Claypole and how he had run away from Mr Sowerberry's house.

"In short, he is a completely bad boy," said Mr Bumble. "All the officers of the workhouse know this. Nobody can do anything with him."

Mr Brownlow believed what Mr Bumble said, but his heart was full of sorrow.

"Mrs Bedwin," he said, when Mr Bumble had gone, taking the five pounds with him. "I'm afraid our friend Oliver is a bad boy."



"It isn't true," said Mrs Bedwin. "It cannot be, sir; it cannot be."

"I'm afraid that it is," said Mr Brownlow. "Mr Bumble has told me everything about him."

"I will never believe it, sir," said the old lady in a firm voice. "Never! I know what children are, sir, and Oliver was a dear, good, gentle child."

"Silence!" said Mr Brownlow. "Never let me hear the boy's name again. You may leave the room, Mrs Bedwin. Remember, I mean what I say. Never speak of Oliver Twist again."

There were sad hearts at Mr Brownlow's house that night. Oliver's heart was heavy too when he thought of his good kind friends. It was well for him that he could not know what they had heard from Mr Bumble, or his heart might have broken completely.

B. Fagin kept Oliver shut up in the house for nearly a week. He told him terrible stories of boys who had run away from him and how he caused them to be hanged. He described their deaths, and said that he hoped it would never be necessary to make Oliver suffer a death like that.

Oliver's blood ran cold as he listened to Fagin's words. Then Fagin went out and left him alone all day.

Poor Oliver could not escape. He was all alone from early morning till midnight. He thought all the time of his kind friends and the bad opinion they must now have of him. He was very sad indeed.

One cold wet night Fagin left the house. He went down the dark street and knocked at the door of another house, as old and dirty as his own.

"Who's there?" said a man's voice.

"Only me, Bill, only me, my dear."

The white dog came forward, making fierce noises.

"Come in," said Sikes. "Lie down," he said to the dog. "Lie down. Don't you know the devil when he's got a coat on?"

The dog had been deceived by Fagin's coat. When Fagin took it off and threw it over a chair the dog returned to the corner from which it had risen.

"Well?" said Sikes.

"Well, my dear?" said Fagin. "Ah, Nancy!"

"Sit down," said Nancy, giving him a chair. She did not seem angry any more. "Sit near the fire."

"It is cold, Nancy dear," said Fagin, as he spread his thin hands before the fire. "It seems to go right through one."

"It must be cold if it finds its way to your heart," said Bill Sikes. "Give him something to drink, Nancy."

They sat there drinking for a time in silence.

C. "Now I'm ready for business," said Sikes. "So say what you've got to say, Fagin."

"It's about this house at Chertsey," said Fagin, rubbing his hands. "When are we going to steal the silver from it? Such silver, my dear, such silver! When is it to be done, Bill?"

"Not at all," said Sikes in a cold voice.

"Not to be done at all?" cried Fagin angrily.

"We can't do it as we planned," said Bill. "Toby Crackit has been staying near the place for over two weeks now, and he can't get any of the servants to help him."

"Do you mean to tell me, Bill, that neither of the men-servants can be won over to our side?"

"Yes, I do mean to tell you so," answered Sikes. "The old lady who owns the house has had those two men-

servants for over twenty years. If you gave them five hundred pounds they wouldn't help you."

"But what about the women-servants?" said Fagin. "Can't Toby Crackit interest them? Think what women are, Bill."

"No good," said Bill Sikes. "Toby Crackit has worn his best clothes all the time. It's still no use."

"Then we must give up the idea," said Fagin. "But it's a sad thing, my dear, to lose so much when we had set our hearts upon it."

"So it is," said Mr Sikes. "Worse luck."

A long silence followed. The men were lost in deep thought. Nancy sat with her eyes fixed on the fire.

D. "Fagin," said Sikes suddenly. "As we can't get the servants to help us, will you give me fifty pounds extra if the work is done from the outside?"

"Yes," said Fagin.

"Then we can do it as soon as you like," said Sikes. "Toby and I climbed into the garden the night before last. We looked at all the doors and windows. The house is shut up at night like a prison. But there's one small window we can open. We need a boy to get through this window and he mustn't be a big one."

"Oliver is the boy for you, my dear," said Fagin. "It's time he began to work for his bread, and the other boys are all too big."

"Yes, Oliver's just the right size," said Sikes.

"And he'll do everything you want, Bill, my dear," said Fagin. "That is, if you frighten him enough."

"Frighten him!" said Sikes. "We shall really frighten him when we begin this work."

"I've thought of it all," said Fagin. "Let Oliver feel

that he is one of us. Fill his mind with the idea that he has been a thief, and he's ours—ours for life."

"Why do you take so much trouble about one child?" asked Sikes. "There are fifty or more boys sleeping in the streets every night. You could choose any of those."

"They are of no use to me," said Fagin. "They look like thieves. But this boy's face is different. Besides, if he escapes again he has us in his power, so he must be one of us and work with us."

"When is the work to be done?" asked Nancy.

"The night after tomorrow," said Sikes.

"Good," said Fagin. "There's no moon then."

It was decided that Nancy should go to Fagin's house the next evening and bring Oliver away with her.

They all had some more to drink; then Fagin said good-night and left the house.

Eleven

OLIVER AND SIKES

A. When Oliver awoke in the morning he was surprised to find that a new pair of shoes had been placed by his bed.

He was pleased, but his pleasure soon went when Fagin told him that he was to be taken to see Bill Sikes that night.

"To—to stay there, sir?" he asked in an anxious voice.

"No, no, my dear. We shouldn't like to lose you. Don't be afraid, Oliver. You shall come back to us again."

"Why am I going?" said Oliver.

"Wait till Bill tells you," said Fagin.

The old man remained very silent until the evening, when he prepared to go out.

"You may burn a candle," he said to Oliver. "And here's a book to read till they come to fetch you. Be careful, Oliver. Bill Sikes is a rough man and thinks nothing of blood when he is angry. Do what he tells you. Good night."

"Good night," said Oliver, and Fagin left the room.

Oliver began to read. It was a book about murders and thieves and dead bodies. The stories were so real and so terrible that the pages seemed to turn red with blood. Sick with fear, Oliver closed the book and pushed it from him. Falling on his knees he prayed to God to save him.

Then he heard a sudden noise. It was Nancy. She turned very white when she saw Oliver saying his prayers. She covered her face with her hands.

"Nancy!" cried Oliver. "What is it?"

"Nothing," said Nancy. "Now, dear, are you ready? You must come with me to Bill. You must be good and quiet. If you are not, you will only do harm to yourself and me too. Give me your hand. Let us be quick."

B. "So you've got the boy," said Sikes when Nancy returned. "Did he come quietly?"

"Like a lamb," said Nancy.

"I'm glad to hear it," said Sikes. "Come here, boy, and let me talk to you."

He pulled off Oliver's cap and threw it in a corner.

"Now, do you know what this is?" he asked, taking up a pistol which lay on the table.

"Yes, sir," said Oliver.

Sikes then loaded the pistol with great care.

"Now it's loaded," he said when he had finished.

"Yes, I see it is, sir," said Oliver.

"Well," said the thief, pressing the pistol against

Oliver's head. "If you speak a word when you're outside, except when I speak to you you'll be shot in the head at once. Do you hear? Now let's have supper before we start."

Nancy prepared supper. It may be easily understood that Oliver did not want to eat much. Afterwards Sikes threw himself on the bed, ordering Nancy to call him at five. Nancy sat by the fire, without moving or speaking. Oliver lay awake on the floor for a long time and then fell asleep.

When he awoke it was not yet light. The candle was still burning. It was raining outside and the sky looked black and full of clouds.

"Now then," said Sikes. "Half past five! Be quick or you'll get no breakfast. It's late enough now."

Oliver was soon ready. Sikes said goodbye to Nancy and took Oliver into the street.

It was blowing and raining hard. The night had been very wet. The windows of the houses were shut and the streets were empty.

Sikes and the boy hastened through the city. The day broke as they reached the country roads. In the afternoon they came to a small town. They arrived at an old inn and Sikes ordered some dinner by the kitchen fire. Afterwards Sikes smoked his pipe and Oliver was so tired that he fell asleep.

C. It was quite dark when Oliver awoke. Sikes gave him a push and he got up.

They continued their journey. The night was very cold. Not a word was spoken. They walked on and on across the fields until they saw the lights of a town not far away.

They came to a bridge and Sikes turned suddenly;

he left the path and went down to the bank near the water.

"The water!" thought Oliver, turning sick with fear again. "He has brought me to this place to murder me."

Then he saw that they were standing in front of a house. It was an old ruined house. No light could be seen. Sikes opened the door and they went inside.

"Hullo!" cried a loud voice as soon as they were inside.

"Don't make such a noise," said Sikes, closing the door. "Show a light, Toby."

A man appeared, holding a candle in his hand. He had red hair and big boots and some large rings on his dirty fingers.

"I'm glad to see you, Bill," said Toby Crackit. "Is this the boy?"

"One of Fagin's," said Sikes.

"What a good boy!" said Toby, looking at Oliver. "And how useful he'll be for the old ladies' pockets in church!"

"Now," said Sikes. "Give us something to eat and drink, Toby. Sit down by the fire, boy," he said to Oliver. "You'll have to go out with us again tonight, although we're not going very far."

Oliver looked at Sikes in silence. He sat with his head in his hands, hardly knowing where he was or what was happening round him. He could eat nothing but a small piece of bread.

The two men lay down for a short sleep. Oliver fell asleep too and dreamed of the dark roads and fields and scenes of the past day.

Then Toby Crackit jumped up.

"Half past one!" he cried. "Pistols ready? And the keys? Nothing forgotten?"

"Everything here," said Sikes. "Now, straight through

the town. Take Oliver's other hand, Toby, and off we go."

Twelve

THE VISIT TO CHERTSEY

A. The two thieves went out with Oliver between them. It was very dark and cold. They crossed the bridge and kept on towards the lights which they had seen before.

"Straight on," whispered Sikes. "There'll be nobody about tonight to see us."

They went quickly through the town. After walking for about a quarter of a mile they stopped before a house with a wall all round it. Toby Crackit quickly climbed to the top of the wall.

"The boy next," he said. "Lift him up. I'll hold him."

Before Oliver had time to look round Sikes had caught him under the arms. In three or four seconds he and Toby were lying on the grass on the other side. Sikes followed at once. They walked towards the house.

Now, for the first time, Oliver, nearly mad with fear and terror, saw that they were planning to enter the house—to steal and perhaps to murder. He cried out and fell to his knees.

"Get up!" said Sikes in anger, drawing the pistol from his pocket. "Get up or I'll shoot you through the head."

"Oh, please let me go," cried Oliver. "Let me run away and die in the fields. I will never come near London, never, never! Oh, pray have mercy on me and do not make me steal!"

Sikes put the pistol to Oliver's head. But Toby took it from him and put his hand over the boy's mouth.

"Quiet!" he whispered. "Don't shoot here. If the boy says another word I'll hit him on the head. That makes no noise and is just as good."

He and Sikes took Oliver to the back of the house. There was a small window there which Sikes was able to open. It was very small but just large enough to allow a boy of Oliver's size to enter.

"Now listen," whispered Sikes to Oliver, taking a lamp from his pocket and lighting it. "I'm going to put you through there. Take this light, go up the steps and along the little hall to the door. Open it and let us in."

B. Toby stood under the window with his hands on his knees to make a step of his back. Sikes stood on his back and put Oliver through the window with his feet first.

"Take this lamp," he said. "Can you see the stairs?"

"Yes," whispered Oliver, more dead than alive.

Sikes pointed to the door.

"If you don't open it I shall shoot you at once," he said. "Now go."

Oliver had decided that, even if he died, he would make one attempt to go upstairs from the hall and wake the family. With this idea in his mind he took one step forward.

"Come back!" cried Sikes aloud. "Back! Back!"

Frightened by this loud cry, Oliver let his lamp fall.

A light appeared. He saw two men at the top of the stairs. There was another cry, a loud noise, a sudden light and smoke—and Oliver fell back. He was shot.

Sikes seized Oliver by the neck before the smoke had cleared away. He fired his own pistol after the men, who were already running away. He pulled Oliver quickly through the window.

"Give me a coat, Toby," he said. "They've hit him. Quick! There's so much blood coming from him."

Then came the noise of a bell ringing. Men were shouting. Oliver felt himself being carried quickly over the ground. Then a cold feeling came into his heart and he saw and heard no more.

C. Sikes rested the body of Oliver Twist across his knee. Then shouted to Toby Crackit, "Come back and help me carry the boy. Come on!"

Toby came slowly across the field.

"Quicker!" cried Sikes, taking the pistol from his pocket.

At this moment Sikes heard a noise. Men were already climbing over the gate into the field. There were dogs with them too.

"They're after us!" cried Toby. "This is the end! Drop the boy and run!"

Toby disappeared quickly, and Sikes, throwing a coat over Oliver, ran out of the other end of the field and disappeared too.

The two men came running to the middle of the field. They looked round.

"I can't see them," said the first man. "I think we should go home now."

"Yes, Mr Giles," said the other man, whose face was very white.

"You are afraid, Brittles," said the first man, whose face was even whiter.

"We're both afraid. It's only natural," said the man called Brittles.

"But if we had caught those thieves," said Mr Giles, "I should certainly have murdered them."

Keeping close together, the two men, who were servants in the big house, went back across the fields.

The air grew colder as the day broke. The rain came down thick and fast. Still Oliver lay on the cold wet ground, without moving or feeling.

Thirteen

OLIVER IS SAFE AGAIN

A. At last Oliver awoke with a cry of pain. His left arm, covered in blood, hung heavy at his side. He could not lift it. He was so weak that he could hardly sit up. He cried with the pain. He tried to get up but fell back to the ground.

He knew that if he lay there he would die. At last he got to his feet and tried to walk. His steps were like those of a man who has drunk too much. He did not know where he was going. The rain was still falling fast.

He reached a road and saw a house near it. "Perhaps the people in that house will have pity on me," he thought. "And if they don't it will be better to die near people than in the open fields."

As he came nearer the house he felt that he had seen it before. Where had he seen it? Then he remembered. That garden wall! Last night on the grass inside he had fallen on his knees and prayed for the two thieves' mercy. It was the house which Sikes and Toby Crackit had planned to enter.

When he remembered this he forgot his pain and thought only of one thing: escape. Escape! He could hardly stand. It was of no use. Where could he escape to?

He pushed open the garden gate, and went slowly across

the grass. The pain grew worse. He climbed the steps, knocked at the door and then fell down, almost dead with pain and fear.

B. At this time Mr Giles, Brittles and the other servants of the big house were having some early morning tea in the kitchen. Mr Giles was telling the servants what had happened in the night. He wanted to show them how brave he had been.

"It was about half past two," he said, "when I woke up and thought I heard a noise. I said to myself, 'This is a dream'. Then I heard the noise again."

"What sort of noise?" asked the cook.

"A sort of pushing noise," said Mr Giles, "as if someone were opening a door or a window. So I sat up in bed and listened."

"Oh!" said the servants.

"Then I decided to call Brittles," said Mr Giles. "I wanted to save him from being murdered in his bed."

"Oh!" said the servants.

"So I got out of bed," continued Mr Giles. "I seized a pistol and went quietly to Brittles's room."

"So you did," said Brittles in a low voice.

"We're dead men, I think, Brittles," I said," continued Mr Giles. "'But don't be frightened', I said."

"Was he frightened?" asked the cook.

"Not a bit of it," said Mr Giles.

"I should have died at once, I'm sure, if it had been me," said the cook.

"You're a woman," said Brittles.

"Brittles is right," said Mr Giles. "Nothing else can be expected from a woman. We, being men, took a lamp and went downstairs."

Suddenly there was a noise outside. The cook gave a cry of alarm.

"What was that noise at the door?"

"It was a knock," said Mr Giles. "Open the door, somebody."

Nobody moved.

"It seems a strange sort of thing, a knock coming at this hour of the morning," said Mr Giles. "Open the door, Brittles. We'll all stand near you."

C. They advanced slowly towards the door with the dogs in front. Brittles opened it and all they saw was poor little Oliver Twist on the step.

"A boy!" cried Mr Giles. He seized Oliver by one leg and one arm and pulled him into the hall.

"Here he is!" he shouted up the stairs. "Here's one of the thieves, madam! Here he is! I shot him, madam, and Brittles held the light."

"Giles!" came a sweet voice from a young lady at the top of the stairs.

"I'm here, miss," cried Mr Giles. "Don't be afraid, miss. I've got one of the thieves here, miss."

"Quiet!" said the young lady. "You'll frighten my aunt as much as the thieves did. Is the poor man hurt?"

"Very bad, miss," cried Mr Giles.

"He looks as if he was dying," shouted Brittles. "Wouldn't you like to come down and look at him, miss?"

"Do be quiet, there's a good man," said the young lady. "Wait quietly for just one moment while I speak to my aunt, and ask her what to do."

She went away and soon returned and said, "Carry the thief to Mr Giles's room. Brittles must take a horse and go to the town for the doctor."

"Won't you look at him first, miss?" asked Mr Giles, with as much pride as if Oliver were some splendid bird he had shot. "Not one little look?"

"Not now! Not now!" replied the young lady. "Poor creature! Be kind to him, Giles."

She turned away, and Mr Giles carried Oliver with great care up to his room.

Fourteen

ANOTHER NEW HOME

A. In a pleasant and comfortable room two ladies sat at a well-spread breakfast table. Mr Giles, in a black suit, was serving them from a table at the side. One of the ladies was old; the other was not yet seventeen. She was a very beautiful girl with blue eyes and a sweet smile. Her name was Rose Maylie and the old lady was her aunt, Mrs Maylie.

"Brittles has been gone more than an hour, hasn't he?" asked the old lady.

"An hour and twelve minutes, madam," said Mr Giles, looking at his silver watch.

"He is always slow," said the old lady.

"Brittles always was a slow boy, madam," said Mr Giles. Brittles had been a servant in the house for more than thirty years, but they still called him a boy.

At this moment a carriage stopped outside the garden gate. A fat gentleman jumped out of it, ran into the house and burst into the room, nearly knocking over Mr Giles and the breakfast table as he came.

"I never heard of such a thing!" he cried as he shook

hands with the ladies. "My dear Mrs Maylie—in the silence of the night—and you too, Miss Rose. I never heard of such a thing! You might be dead with fright!"

"We are all right, Dr Losberne," said Rose, "but there is a poor man upstairs, whom my aunt wishes you to see."

"So Brittles told me," said Dr Losberne. "You shot him, Giles? Where is he? Show me the way. I'll look in again as I come down, Mrs Maylie."

The doctor followed Mr Giles upstairs. He stayed in Mr Giles's room for a long time—much longer than he or the ladies had expected. He stayed there for over an hour. His bag was brought up from the carriage; a bedroom bell was rung very often and the servants ran up and down the stairs all the time.

B. At last Dr Losberne returned to the two ladies.

"This is a very strange thing, Mrs Maylie," he said.

"The thief is not in danger, I hope?" said the old lady.

"I don't think he is," replied the doctor. "Have you seen this thief?"

"No," said the old lady.

"Nor heard anything about him?"

"No."

"I was going to tell you about him when the doctor came in, madam," said Mr Giles. The truth was that he felt rather ashamed to say that he had shot only a small boy.

"Rose wished to see the man," said Mrs Maylie, "but I wouldn't allow it."

"There is nothing to be afraid of," said the doctor.

"He is quiet and comfortable now. Will you both come and see him while I am here?"

"If it is necessary," said Mrs Maylie.

The doctor led the way upstairs.

"Now," he said, as he opened the door, "let us hear what you think of him."

He drew back the curtains of the bed. There, instead of the black evil creature they had expected to see, lay a child. He was worn with pain and in a deep sleep. His left arm was crossed on his breast. His head rested on the other arm, half hidden by his long hair.

They looked at him in silence. Then the younger lady bent over him and gathered his hair from his face. As she did so her tears fell upon his face. Oliver moved, and smiled in his sleep.

"What can this mean?" said the elder lady. "This poor child can never have been a thief."

"Who can say?" answered the doctor. "Bad things often live in a beautiful house. Evil, like death, can be found among the young as well as the old."

"But at so early an age!" cried Rose. "How young he is! He may never have known a mother's love or the joy of a comfortable home. Oh, aunt, dear aunt, have pity on him! Do not let them take this sick child to prison!"

"My dear love," said the old lady, as she folded the girl to her heart, "do you think I would harm a hair of his head? My days will soon be ended. May mercy be shown to me as I show it to others."

Hour after hour passed. Oliver was still in a heavy sleep. It was evening before Dr Losberne told the ladies that Oliver was awake and able to talk to them.

Their talk was a long one. Oliver told them the story of his life, and was often forced to stop, because of the pain and his weak condition. It was sad to hear the low voice of a sick child, telling of all evil things he had suffered and of the terrible things which hard men had done to him.

But there were gentle hands and loving smiles to help him. He felt calm and happy and could have died in perfect peace.

C. Soon Oliver grew better and was able to thank the ladies for their love and care.

"Oh, dear lady, if I could only work for you," he said to Rose one day, "I would work the whole day long, to make you happy."

"We are going into the country soon," said Rose. "My aunt wants you to come with us. You can help us there in the garden."

They all had a happy time in the country. It was a completely new life for Oliver. He went for walks with Mrs Maylie and Rose. He listened while they talked of books, and sometimes sat near them to listen while Rose read aloud. He listened too when Rose played the piano in the evenings and sang in her sweet and gentle voice.

He helped in the garden and he worked at his lessons too. He fed Mrs Maylie's birds and sometimes he got up at six o'clock in the morning to pick flowers to put on the breakfast table.

Three months passed away—months of peace and beauty. Oliver was really happy; the ladies looked after him so well and he loved them with all his heart.

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Fifteen

A STRANGE MYSTERY

A. Spring passed quickly and summer came. They stayed in the country. Oliver grew stronger and healthier and happier all the time.

One beautiful night Oliver and the two ladies took a longer walk than usual. The day had been warm and there was a bright moon. When they returned Rose sat down at the piano. After playing for a little time her hands suddenly began to shake. Her face was very white.

"Rose, my love!" cried Mrs Maylie. "What is this? What is the matter?"

"Nothing, aunt, nothing," said Rose. "I am rather tired. That's all. I shall go to bed now and be better tomorrow."

When morning came Rose was worse. It was clear that she was suffering from a serious illness. Mrs Maylie's grief was terrible.

"We must send for Dr Losberne at once, Oliver," she said. "I have written a letter to him. It must be carried to the inn of the nearest town, which is just four miles away over the fields. From there someone will ride at once with it to Chertsey. Will you take it to the inn for me?"

Oliver ran off at once across the fields with the letter. He ran quickly, almost without stopping, until he came to the little town.

Here he stopped and looked for the inn. He found it and arranged for the letter to Dr Losberne to be taken to Chertsey at once.



When they returned, Rose sat down at the piano.

B. He was coming out of the inn when he almost fell against a tall man in a black coat.

"Oh!" said the man, fixing his eyes on Oliver. "What the devil's this?"

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Oliver. "I was in a great hurry to get home and didn't see you were coming."

"Death!" said the man, looking at Oliver with his large, dark eyes. "Who would have thought that he would rise up from a coffin to get in my way?"

"I am sorry," said Oliver, rather afraid of the strange man's wild look. "I hope I have not hurt you."

"Curse you!" said the man in a voice of terrible anger. "Curses on your head and black death on, your heart! What are you doing here?"

He advanced towards Oliver as if to hit him, and then suddenly fell to the ground.

Oliver looked for a moment at the mad man (for he thought that he must be mad) and then ran into the inn for help. Some men came and carried the strange person inside. Then Oliver ran off as fast as he could, to make up for lost time.

He soon forgot about this strange event, for when he got back Rose Maylie was worse and everyone thought that she would die.

Late that night Dr Losberne arrived and went straight to Rose. Mrs Maylie and Oliver waited outside. Then the doctor came out.

"It is hard," he said, turning away as he spoke. "So young; so much loved; but there is very little hope."

C. Day after day passed. The house was very quiet. People whispered; anxious faces appeared at the gate from time to time; women and children went away in tears.

Oliver went to the little church and wept and prayed for Rose in silence. When he came back Mrs Maylie was sitting alone in her room. Oliver's heart was heavy. He knew that Mrs Maylie always sat by Rose's bed and he wondered what change could have driven her away.

He learned that Rose had fallen into a deep sleep, from which she would awake either to get better or to die.

He and Mrs Maylie sat, listening, and afraid to speak, for hours. At last Dr Losberne came in.

"What of Rose?" cried the old lady. "Tell me at once! I can bear it. Oh, tell me, in the name of Heaven!"

"You must be calm," said the doctor. "Be calm, I pray you, my dear madam."

"Tell me in God's name! My dear child! She is dead? She is dying?"

"No!" cried the doctor, with great feeling. "As God is good, she will not die but will live to bless us all for years to come."

The old lady fell upon her knees in prayer. It was almost too much happiness to bear. Oliver could not weep, or speak, or rest. He went out and picked some beautiful flowers for Rose's room.

Every day Rose grew better, but she was weak for a long time and could not leave her room. There were no more evening walks now, and Oliver spent much of the time in his own little room, working at his lessons.

D. One evening, after a hot summer's day, Oliver sat at his books. He had been reading for a long while and felt tired and half asleep.

Suddenly the room seemed to fade, and he seemed to be back in Fagin's house again. There sat the terrible old man in the corner, pointing at him and whispering to

another man who sat beside him with his face turned away.

He thought he heard Fagin say, "That's the boy, sure enough. Come away."

"The boy!" the other man seemed to answer. "Could I ever mistake him? I could point him out even in a crowd of ghosts. If he lay in his coffin fifty feet deep I should know where he was even if there wasn't a mark above to show it."

The man seemed to say this with such fierce anger and hatred that Oliver awoke with the fear, and jumped up.

Good Heaven! What was that, which sent the blood rushing to his heart and took away from him all power to speak or move? There—there—at the window—close before him—so close that he could have almost touched him—there stood Fagin! And beside him, white with anger or fear or both, stood the very man who had met him outside the inn.

It was but a second—and they were gone. But they had seen him and he them, and their look was fixed in his memory as if it had been cut in stone and set before him from his birth.

He stood quite still for a moment and then, jumping from the window into the garden, called for help in a loud voice.

The servants came running. All Oliver could say was, "Fagin! Fagin!"

"Was it a man?" cried Mr Giles, taking up a heavy stick. "Which way did he go?"

"Over there!" cried Oliver.

Mr Giles ran off; Britles followed him. Oliver ran behind, and Dr Losberne, who had been taking a short walk, joined in the hunt, but the two men were nowhere to be found.

"It must have been a dream, Oliver," said Dr Losberne.

"Oh no, indeed sir," replied Oliver. "I saw old Fagin—I am sure of that. I saw them both as clear as I can see you now."

"Who was the other man?" asked Dr Losberne.

"The very same man I told you of, who came so suddenly upon me at the inn," said Oliver. "We had our eyes fixed full upon each other; and I am sure of it."

"This is very strange," said Dr Losberne. They continued to search for the two men, but without success. The next day Mr Giles was sent to all the inns for miles around to ask about the two strangers, but no one could tell him anything.

The day after that Oliver went with Dr Losberne to the town, but they could discover nothing, and the strange visit remained a complete mystery.

Sixteen

MR BUMBLE AND THE STRANGER

A. In the workhouse where Oliver was born Mr Bumble was sitting by the fire. He was drinking his tea and reading the paper, when a man came to see him. The man was tall and dark and wore a black coat. It was the man whom Oliver had seen at the inn, and later outside his window with Fagin.

"I think I know you, Mr Bumble," said the stranger. "You are an officer of the workhouse, are you not?"

"I am now master of the workhouse," said Mr Bumble slowly and in an important voice. "Master of the workhouse, young man."

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"Now please listen to me," said the stranger. "I want you to tell me something. I don't ask you to do it for nothing. Take this to begin with."

As he spoke he put two gold coins on the table. Mr Bumble took them and put them in his pocket.

"Try to remember something, Mr Bumble," said the stranger. "Let me see—twelve years ago last winter."

"It's a long time," said Mr Bumble.

"Something happened in your workhouse then," said the man. "A boy was born there."

"We have had many boys born in the workhouse," said Mr Bumble.

"I speak of one," said the stranger. "He was a little boy with a thin face. He was sent out to work to help make coffins. Then he ran away."

"Why, you mean Oliver! Young Twist!" said Mr Bumble. "I remember of course. He was a really bad—"

"It's not of him I want to hear," said the stranger. "I wish he had made his own coffin and put his body in it! No, I wish to hear about a woman: the old woman who looked after his mother. Where is she?"

"Where is she?" said Mr Bumble. "She died last winter."

B. The stranger looked at Mr Bumble in silence. He seemed lost in thought for a few minutes. Then he rose to go.

"Wait!" said Mr Bumble. "When that old woman died she had a friend with her—another old woman from the workhouse. She is still alive and perhaps she can help you."

"How can I find her?" asked the stranger.

"Only through me," said Mr Bumble.

"When?"

"Tomorrow."

"At nine in the evening," said the stranger taking a piece of paper and writing an address on it. "Bring her to me at this place and in secret."

With these words he left the room. Mr Bumble looked at the paper and saw that it had no name on it. He got up and ran after the man.

"What do you want?" cried the man, turning round quickly, as Bumble touched him on the arm. "Why are you following me?"

"Only to ask a question," said the other, pointing to the piece of paper. "What name am I to ask for?"

"Monks," answered the man and walked quickly away.

C. It was a hot summer evening. Mr Bumble came down to a deserted spot by the river. An old woman was with him. There were a few houses, almost all in ruins, near the edge of the river.

"The place should be somewhere near here," said Mr Bumble, looking at the piece of paper by the light of his lamp.

"Hullo!" said a voice from an old empty house just near them. "Come in, both of you."

They went in. The man in the black coat closed the door behind them.

"Now," he said. "Let us come to our business. Is this the woman?"

"Yes," said Mr Bumble.

"Now," said the stranger, addressing the old woman, "Mr Bumble tells me that you were with a certain old woman on the night she died. She told you something in secret, I believe?"

"About the mother of Oliver Twist," said the old woman. "Yes, that's right."

"What did she say?"

"How much is it worth to you?" said Mr Bumble.

"It may be worth nothing or it may be worth twenty pounds," said Monks. "Let me hear it first."

"Add five pounds to that. Give me twenty-five pounds in gold," said Mr Bumble. "I will pay the old woman what I think is right for her. You must give me the twenty-five pounds first. Then she will speak. Not before."

"Twenty-five pounds!" cried Monks.

"That's what I said. It's not very much."

"Not very much for a small secret which may be nothing when it's told!" cried Monks. "A secret which has been hidden for twelve years past or more! It's far too much."

"Take it or leave it," said Mr Bumble.

D. Monks thought for a moment. Then he took some money from his pocket. He counted out twenty-five gold coins and gave them to Mr Bumble.

"Now," he said. "Let's hear the story."

"When old Sally died," said the old woman, "she and I were alone."

"Was there no one else near?" asked Monks. "No one who could have heard you and understood what you were saying to each other?"

"Not a soul," replied the old woman. "We were quite alone. I stood alone beside the body when death came over it."

"Good," said Monks. "Go on."

"She spoke of a young girl," continued the woman, "a young girl who had brought a child into the world

some years before—in that same room, in that same bed. The child was the one named Oliver Twist by Mr Bumble.”

“Go on,” said Monks.

“Old Sally told me that the young mother had given her something before she died. She had prayed her, almost with her last breath, to keep it for the child.”

“And did she keep it for the boy? What did she do with it?” cried Monks.

“She kept it for herself. She never gave it to the child.”

“And then?”

“She sold it to me later on, when the child had left the workhouse.”

“Where is it now?” cried Monks.

“Here,” said the woman. She threw a small bag on to the table. Monks tore it open. It contained a little gold ornament, in which there were two pieces of hair, and a plain gold wedding ring.

“The ring has the word ‘Agnes’ inside it,” said the old woman. “That was the name of the child’s mother.”

“And this is all?” said Monks, looking again at the two small objects.

“All,” replied the woman.

There was a silence. Mr Bumble had been silent while they were talking. Then he said: “May I ask two questions?”

“You may ask,” said Monks, “but whether I answer or not is another question.”

“First,” said Mr Bumble. “Is this what you expected to get?”

“It is,” answered Monks. “What is your other question?”

“What do you intend to do about it? Can it be used against me?”



"There," said Monks, throwing the bag into the river

"Never," replied Monks, "nor against me either. Now come with me and I will show you what I am going to do with these two ornaments."

He led them out of the old house and down to the river. It was raining now and the water was running fast.

"There!" said Monks, throwing the bag into the river. "That is the end of that! There is nothing more to say. And you two will keep quiet about all this?"

"You may depend on us, Mr Monks," said Mr Bumble, bowing.

"I am glad to hear that," said Monks. "And now good-bye. Light your lamp and get away from here as fast as you can."

Seventeen

NANCY LEARNS A SECRET

A. Bill Sikes lay on his bed, covered by his coat. He had been ill for several weeks. His dog sat by the side of the bed. A young woman sat near the window. She looked so white and thin that it was difficult to see that she was Nancy.

"How do you feel tonight, Bill?" she said.

"As weak as water," said Bill.

The door opened and Fagin came into the room. He was followed by Dawkins and Charles Bates, carrying a box. Sikes looked at them in surprise.

"What evil wind has blown you here?" he asked.

"No evil wind at all, my dear," said Fagin. "Evil winds blow nobody any good and I've brought something good with me that you'll be glad to see. Dawkins, my

dear, open the box and give Bill the little things that we spent all our money on this morning."

Dawkins opened the box, and Charley Bates put the things on the table.

"A lovely piece of meat, Bill," said Charley. "Some good strong tea and some of the best sugar. Fresh bread too, cheese, and a bottle of something good. Here, drink this, Bill."

Bill drank the glass at once.

"Good," said Fagin, rubbing his hands with great pleasure. "You're better, Bill. I can see."

"Better!" cried Bill. "I might have been dead twenty times over before you'd have done anything to help me. What do you mean by leaving me like this for three weeks, you devil?"

"Just listen to him, boys," said Fagin. "When we've brought him all these beautiful things."

"These things are all right," said Bill, "but what have you got to say for yourself? Why did you leave me here, ill and without money?"

"I couldn't help it, Bill," said Fagin. "I can't explain it all here but I couldn't help it, upon my honour."

"Upon your honour! Your honour! Have you any honour?" said Sikes. "Here, cut me a piece of meat, one of you boys."

"Don't be angry, my dear," said Fagin. "I never forgot you, Bill; never once. But when I heard that our plan had failed and you had left Oliver behind, I thought it best to keep quiet and stay away from London for a while."

"Yes," said Bill, "and if it hadn't been for the girl, I might have died."

"There now, Bill," said Fagin. "'If it hadn't been for

the girl! And who but poor old Fagin was it that found you such a useful girl?"

"That's true, Bill," said Nancy. "Let him be; let him be."

B. "Now listen to me, Bill," said Fagin. "We have got to get Oliver back. He's worth a lot of money to me, Bill."

"How can you get him back?" said Bill.

"He's staying with Miss Maylie and her aunt. And I think we have a chance now, Bill. They have come to London from the country and they're staying at a hotel near Hyde Park. We'll make another attempt to get Oliver back. Nancy shall help us again. Why, Nancy, how white you look!"

"White?" said the girl, covering her eyes with her hands.

"Quite terrible. What have you been doing to yourself?"

"Nothing that I know of, except sitting in this room for weeks and weeks," was the answer.

"Well, you can go out now," said Sikes. "I need some money and you can go back with Fagin to his house and get it for me. I'll have a sleep while you're gone!"

"I haven't any money," said Fagin.

"You've got lots at home," said Bill.

"Lots!" cried Fagin, holding up his hands. "I haven't as much as would—"

"I don't know how much you've got and I dare say you hardly know yourself, as it would take a good long time to count it," said Bill Sikes; "but I must have some tonight and that's flat. Take Nancy with you to get it."

Fagin was not very pleased, but in the end he agreed and left for home, followed by Nancy.

C. "Now," said Fagin when they reached his room. "I'll go and get you the money. Nancy. This is the key of a little box in which I keep a few things away from the boys, my dear. I never put my money away, for I've none to put away, my dear—ha! ha! ha!—none to put away. It's poor work, Nancy, and I get no thanks; but I like to see the young people around me; and I bear it all, I bear it all. Quiet!" he said, quickly hiding the key in his pocket. "Who's that? Listen."

They heard the sound of a man's voice on the stairs.

"It's the man whom I was expecting to see," whispered Fagin. "Not a word about the money while he's here, Nancy! He won't stop long. Not ten minutes, my dear."

Fagin took the candle to the door. A man in a black coat stood there. It was Monks. He drew back when he saw Nancy.

"Only one of my young people," said Fagin. "Don't move, Nancy."

Monks came in.

"Any news?" asked Fagin.

"Great."

"And good?"

"Not bad," said Monks with a smile. "I have been quick enough this time. Let me have a word with you."

Fagin led the way to another room. Nancy quickly took off her shoes, followed them and stood quietly near the door. She listened to all that they said.

Fifteen minutes later she returned to the room. Monks went down the stairs into the street, and Fagin came back.

"Why, Nancy, you look whiter than ever," he said. "Are you sure you're all right, my dear?"

"Quite all right," said Nancy. "Come, give me the money and let me get back."

There were tears in her eyes, but Fagin did not see them. He counted out the money for Sikes and gave it to Nancy. She took it, said goodbye quickly and left the house.

Eighteen

A VISIT TO MISS MAYLIE

A. The next day Bill Sikes felt a little better and Nancy went out to buy food and drink with the money Fagin had provided.

Sikes drank a great deal.

"Fagin's right," he said to Nancy that evening. "You're looking white as a ghost. Come, put on your old face or I'll change it so you won't know it again when you do want it. Pour out another drink for me."

Nancy obeyed without speaking and watched Sikes as he drank. He fell back with his eyes closed; then his eyes opened again; then closed once more. After two or three minutes he sprang up with a look of terror, then fell back again and lay in a deep and heavy sleep.

"At last!" whispered Nancy as she rose. "The drink has made him sleep. I must go now or I may be too late."

She put on her hat and looked round in fear, as if she expected every moment to feel Sikes's heavy hand on her shoulder. She closed the door without a sound and was soon hurrying along through the busy London streets.

As the clock struck ten she entered the hall of a quiet family hotel near Hyde Park.

"Now, what do you want here?" asked one of the servants. He saw that she was white and thin and wearing old clothes.

"I want to see a lady who is staying here."

"A lady!" was the reply. "What lady?"

"Miss Maylie."

"What name am I to say?"

"It's of no use saying any," replied Nancy.

"Nor business?" said the servant.

"No, nor that neither," answered the girl. "I must see the lady."

"Come," said the servant, pushing her towards the door. "None of this. Take yourself off."

"I shall be carried out if I go!" cried Nancy in a loud voice. "Isn't there anybody here," she said, looking round, "who will carry a message to Miss Maylie for me?"

"All right," said another of the servants, taking pity on her. "I'll give the message to Miss Maylie for you. What is the message?"

"Tell Miss Maylie that a young woman wishes to speak to her alone," said Nancy, "and it's very important."

B. The servant went up the stairs. Soon he returned and asked Nancy to follow him. He led her to a small room. Rose Maylie was there.

"I am the person you wanted to see," said Rose in a sweet voice. "Tell me why you have come."

The kind voice and the gentle manner took Nancy by surprise. She burst into tears.

"Oh, lady, lady!" she said. "If there were more like you in the world there would be fewer like me!"

"Sit down," said Rose. "If you are in trouble I shall be glad to help you. Please sit down."

"Let me stand, lady," said Nancy. "Is—is that door shut?"

"Yes," said Rose. "Why?"

"Because," said the girl, "I am going to put my life and the lives of others in your hands. I am the girl who took Oliver back to Fagin's house when he went out from Mr Brownlow's house that night."

"You!" said Rose.

"I, lady!" replied the girl. "I am that terrible creature—that creature who lives among thieves. I have never known any better life from the first moment which I can remember."

"I pity you," said Rose. "It touches my heart to hear you."

"Heaven bless you for being so kind," said Nancy. "If you knew what I am sometimes you would pity me indeed. I have come from people who would murder me if they knew that I was here. But I want to tell you something which I have heard. Do you know a man called Monks?"

"No," said Rose.

"He knows you, and knew you were here," said Nancy. "That is how I found this hotel."

"I never heard the name," said Rose.

"Then perhaps he has some other name," said Nancy. "I thought of that before. Last night I heard him talking to Fagin. They know that Oliver is here and they are planning to catch him again. Monks intends to pay Fagin to get Oliver back and turn him into a thief again."

"But why?" asked Rose.

"I cannot quite understand. It was difficult to hear it all. But Monks said to Fagin, 'The truth about Oliver's birth lies at the bottom of the river'. Then he said something about getting the young devil's money."

"What is all this?" said Rose.

"It is the truth, lady, though it comes from my lips,"

said Nancy. "Monks wants Fagin to turn Oliver into a thief again and then make him murder someone, so that he will lose his life. Monks said, 'That will be the end of my young brother, Oliver'."

"His brother!" cried Rose.

"Those were his words, lady," said Nancy, "and now it is growing late and I must get back."

C. "Do not go," said Rose. "Stay here. You will be safe with me. Why do we not tell the police?"

"I must go back," said Nancy. "Dear lady, I must return. There is one among those men whom I love. I cannot leave him."

"But what am I to do?" said Rose.

"You must tell this story to some kind gentleman who will hear it as a secret and advise you what to do," said Nancy. "Oliver must be saved: that is all."

"But where can I find you again if it is necessary?" asked Rose.

"Will you promise me that you will keep my secret and come alone, or with the only other person who knows it?"

"I promise," said Rose.

"Then, if I am alive," said Nancy, "I will walk on London Bridge every Sunday night from eleven until the clock strikes twelve. And now goodbye, dear lady."

"Stay another moment," said Rose. "Why must you return to those thieves when I can save you? Will you not stay—or at least take some money so that you can lead an honest life in future? I wish to help you."

"Not a penny," said Nancy, bursting into tears. "You could help me best if you could take my life at once: I am worth nothing. God bless you, sweet lady."



"Stay another moment," said Rose.

She turned away and, crying aloud in her grief, she left the room.

Nineteen

OLD FRIENDS MEET

A. Oliver asked Rose if they could see Mr Brownlow again, now that they were staying in London. He had told the two ladies how good and kind Mr Brownlow was, and how well he and Mrs Bedwin had looked after him. He had wanted for a long time to see his old friends again.

Rose decided to visit Mr Brownlow and to tell him Nancy's secret. She went with Oliver. When they arrived at Mr Brownlow's house she sent up her card by the servant, asking to see Mr Brownlow on very important business.

The servant asked her to come in. She left Oliver in the carriage with Mr Giles and followed the servant into an upper room. There she met an old gentleman who looked very kind. Sitting near him was another old gentleman who did not look so kind.

"Mr Brownlow, sir?" asked Rose, looking from one gentleman to the other.

"That is my name," said the one with the kind face. "This is my friend, Mr Grimwig. Grimwig, will you leave us for a few minutes?"

Rose remembered what Oliver had told her about Mr Grimwig.

"I believe that I need not give the gentleman the trouble of going away," she said. "I think he knows the business about which I wish to speak to you."

Mr Grimwig bowed.

"I shall surprise you very much," said Rose, "but you were once very kind to a very dear young friend of mine. I'm sure that you will be interested to hear about him again. His name is Oliver Twist."

"Indeed!" said Mr Brownlow. Both he and Mr Grimwig looked very surprised.

"I'm afraid I was led to form a very bad opinion of this child," said Mr Brownlow.

"A bad boy!" said Mr Grimwig. "I'll eat my head if he's not a bad boy!"

"He is a good boy," said Rose quickly. "He has a fine nature and a warm heart."

"Tell us what you know about this poor child," said Mr Brownlow. "We are very interested in him."

B. Rose told them all that had happened to Oliver. She told them too that Oliver's only sorrow for some months past was that he could not see his dear old friend, Mr Brownlow.

"Thank God!" said the old gentleman. "This is great happiness to me, great happiness. But, Miss Maylie, you have not told us where he is now. Why have you not brought him with you?"

"He is waiting in the carriage at the door," said Rose.

"At the door!" cried Mr Brownlow. He hurried out of the room and down the stairs without another word.

When he had gone Mr Grimwig rose from his chair and walked up and down the room. Then, stopping suddenly before Rose, he kissed her.

"Don't be afraid," he said, as the young lady rose in some alarm. "I'm old enough to be your grandfather. You're a sweet girl. I like you—Ah! Here they are!"

He returned quickly to his chair as Mr Brownlow came in with Oliver. Mrs Bedwin came too and Oliver sprang into her arms.

"My dear boy, my boy!" she cried. "God is good to me. I knew you would come back. Where have you been all this time? I have never forgotten you."

While Oliver and the old lady were talking and laughing and crying and kissing, Mr Brownlow led Rose into another room. There he heard the story of Nancy's visit to Rose.

C. "This is a very strange mystery," said Mr Brownlow, "and we shall never get to the bottom of it until we find this man, Monks."

"Only the girl Nancy can help us there," said Rose, "and she cannot be seen until next Sunday. My aunt intends to return to the country before then."

"You must explain matters to your aunt and ask her to stay in London a week or two longer," said Mr Brownlow. "I suppose it is not possible to see Nancy before next Sunday?"

"No," said Rose. "We arranged it like that, and I do not want to break my promise in any way."

"Very well," said Mr Brownlow. "I will walk with you over London Bridge next Sunday night. It seems that we can do nothing until then. And I suggest we keep these matters secret even from Oliver himself."

"Yes indeed," said Rose. "We must do nothing to trouble his happiness."

"And now let us join the others," said Mr Brownlow, "and I hope, my dear young lady, that you will do us the honour of taking tea with us before returning to your hotel."

Twenty

A MIDNIGHT APPOINTMENT

A. It was Sunday night. The church clock struck the hour. Sikes and Fagin were talking but they stopped to listen. Nancy looked up and listened too. Eleven.

"Nearly midnight," said Sikes, "and a dark and heavy night too. A good night for business."

"What a pity, Bill, my dear," said Fagin, "that there's no business quite ready for us tonight."

"Yes, you're right," said Sikes. "I feel like work tonight. Hullo, Nancy, where are you going at this time of night?"

"Not far," said Nancy, putting on her hat and going towards the door.

"That's no answer. Where are you going?"

"I say, not far."

"And I say where? Do you hear me?"

"I don't know where," said the girl.

"Then I do," said Sikes. "Nowhere. Sit down."

"I'm not well. I told you that before," said Nancy. "I want a breath of air."

"Put your head out of the window," said Sikes.

"There's not enough there," said the girl. "I want it in the street."

"Then you won't have it," answered Sikes. He rose and shut the door. He took Nancy's hat from her head and threw it on the floor. "Now stay quietly where you are, will you?"

"You needn't think a hat will stop me!" shouted Nancy. "Let me go at once. At once!"

"No!" said Sikes.

"Tell him to let me go, Fagin. It'll be better for him. Do you hear me?" cried Nancy.

"Hear you!" cried Sikes. "Yes and if I hear you for half a minute longer I'll set the dog on you."

"Let me go, Bill!" cried Nancy, kneeling on the floor.

"For only one hour—do—do!"

"The girl's mad!" cried Sikes, seizing her by the arm.

"Get up!"

"Not till you let me go. Never! Never!"

Sikes pulled her to her feet and threw her into a chair. She fought and cried until the clock struck twelve. Then she became quiet.

"What a strange girl she is!" said Sikes to Fagin.

"I've never known her like this before," said Fagin. He was thinking hard: "Why has Nancy behaved in this strange way?"

B. Fagin thought: "Nancy is tired of Bill. She has found a new friend. Perhaps I can get her to work for me against Bill. Perhaps I can even get her to poison him. Women have done such things before now. I must arrange for Charley Bates to follow her and see where she goes at night."

Aloud he said, "I must go now, Bill. Will someone give me a light down the stairs?"

"Give him a light to the door," said Bill to Nancy. "It's a pity he should break his neck himself with no one there to enjoy the sight."

Nancy, with a candle, followed the old man down the stairs. When they got to the door Fagin whispered, "What is it, Nancy, dear?"

"What do you mean?" said Nancy.

"What is the reason of all this? If Bill is so hard with you, why don't you—?"

"Well?" said the girl, as Fagin stopped, with his mouth almost touching her ear, and his eyes looking into hers.

"No matter just now. We'll talk of this again. You have a friend in me, Nancy, a firm friend. If you have any trouble with someone who treats you like a dog, then come to me, I say, come to me. You know me, don't you, Nancy?"

Nancy laughed: "I know you very well!" she said. Then she turned away. "Good night!"

C. It was Sunday night again. The church clocks struck a quarter to twelve. Two persons appeared on London Bridge. One was Nancy and the other was Charley Bates, hiding in the shadows.

Soon two more figures appeared: a young lady and an old gentleman.

"Come down the steps here," said Nancy. "I am afraid to speak to you on the public road. Down the steps here at the end of the bridge."

They went down the steps.

"This is far enough," said Mr Brownlow. "You were not here last Sunday, I understand?"

"I couldn't come," said Nancy. "I was kept back by force."

"By whom?"

"By the man that I told Miss Maylie about. It's not easy for me to leave him unless he knows why. I had to give him a drink to make him sleep when I wanted to visit Miss Maylie at the hotel first of all."

"Did he awake before you returned?"

"No, and neither he nor any of the others knows anything about it."

"Good," said Mr Brownlow. "Now, first we must find

this man Monks and learn his secret. Then Fagin must be put in prison. Oliver can never be safe while Fagin is free. You must tell the police about Fagin."

"I will not do it! I will never do it!" cried Nancy. "Fagin is a devil—he has been worse than a devil to me—but I will never do it!"

"Tell me why," said Mr Brownlow.

"Miss Maylie knows the reason," said Nancy. "If Fagin is taken by the police, Bill Sikes will be taken too—and I love him."

"Then," said Mr Brownlow, "put Monks in our hands and we will do nothing to Fagin without your permission. Tell us all you know about Monks."

D. Nancy began to describe him.

"He is tall and dark, with wild eyes. I think that he is young. About twenty-eight. When he walks he looks over his shoulder, first to one side and then to the other. Sometimes he behaves in a strange way, and bites his hands. Why do you look so surprised, Mr Brownlow?"

"It is nothing," said Mr Brownlow. "Please continue."

"He wears black clothes. On his neck there is—"

"A broad red mark like a burn?" cried Mr Brownlow.

"What's this?" said Nancy. "Do you know him?"

"I think I do," said Mr Brownlow. "We shall see. It may not be the same person."

He seemed lost in thought for a moment. "It must be he!" he said to himself. "It must be he!" He held out his hand to give Nancy some money.

"I have not done this for money," she said. "I have done it for Oliver and for the sweet lady."

"Please take the money," said Rose. "It may help you in an hour of need and trouble."

"God bless you," said Nancy. "Now I must go on my way. Good night, good night."

She left them. Rose and Mr Brownlow went slowly up the steps of the bridge. Charley Bates had disappeared from the shadows. He was running towards Fagin's house as fast as his legs could carry him.

Twenty-One

NANCY IS MURDERED

A. It was nearly two hours before sunrise. Fagin sat waiting in his room. His face was so white and his eyes were so red that he looked like some terrible spirit risen from the grave.

His face was turned towards a candle that stood on the table by his side. His right hand was raised to his lips. Deep in thought, he bit his long black nails.

Charley Bates lay on the floor, fast asleep. The old man looked at him from time to time and then back at the candle again.

His thoughts were terrible ones: hatred of Nancy, who had dared to talk with strangers, anger at the failure of his plans, fear of ruin and prison and death.

He sat without moving until he heard a footstep in the street.

"At last!" he whispered. "At last!"

He opened the door and came back into the room with Bill Sikes. Sikes carried a box, which he put on the table.

"There!" he said. "Take that. It's been trouble enough to get it. I thought I should have been here

three hours ago. The police have got Dawkins. He's in prison now."

Fagin took the box and sat down again without speaking.

B. Fagin sat with his eyes fixed on Sikes.

"What's the matter?" cried Sikes. "Why are you looking at me like that?"

Fagin raised his hand, but he could not speak.

"Have you gone mad too?" shouted Sikes.

"No, no, Bill," said Fagin. "It's not you. You're not the person I'm thinking about. But I have got something to tell you."

"Speak then," said the thief, "and be quick, or Nancy will think I'm lost."

"Lost!" cried Fagin. "She already thinks that, Bill."

Sikes looked at him in surprise. Then he seized him by the neck with his hands and shook him.

"Speak, will you?" he said. "Open your mouth and say what you've got to say. Out with it, you old devil!"

"Suppose that Charley Bates did something," began Fagin.

Sikes turned round to see where Bates was sleeping, as if he had not seen him before.

"Well?" he said.

"Suppose he told other people about us, describing us all and saying what we did and where we lived. Suppose he went out at night in secret and told these people where they could find us, so that the police might take us. Suppose he did this, what then? What would you do?"

"What then!" shouted Sikes with a terrible curse. "What would I do to him? I'd kill him—I'd get his head under my boot and crack it into pieces."

"What if I did it?"

"I'd crack your head too, until it looked as if a heavy carriage had gone over it."

"You would?"

"Would I!" cried Sikes. "Try me!"

"If it was Dawkins, or Toby or Bet—"

"I don't care who," said Sikes. "Whoever it was, I'd serve them the same."

Fagin looked hard at Bill. Then he turned to the sleeping boy and woke him.

"Poor Charley," said Fagin. "He's tired—tired with watching her so long—watching her, Bill."

"What do you mean?" asked Sikes.

C. Fagin made no answer. Charley Bates sat up and rubbed his eyes.

"Tell me what you told me before, Charley, once again—just for him to hear," said Fagin, pointing to Sikes.

"Tell you what?" asked Charley, still half asleep.

"About—NANCY," said Fagin, holding Sikes by the arm as if to stop him from leaving the house before he had heard enough. "You followed her?"

"Yes."

"To London Bridge?"

"Yes."

"And there she met two people?"

"So she did."

"A gentleman and a lady. She had been to see them before. They asked her to tell them about Monks. They knew where we lived and how we could best be watched. She told them everything. She did, didn't she?" cried Fagin, half mad with anger.

"That's right," said Charley.

"And what did they say about last Sunday?"

"They asked her why she didn't come last Sunday as she promised. She said she couldn't."

"Why—why? Tell him that."

"Because she was kept at home by Bill, the man she told them of before."

"Let me go!" cried Sikes in terrible anger, breaking away from Fagin. He threw the old man from him, and rushed out of the room.

"Bill, Bill!" cried Fagin, following him quickly. "A word. Only a word. You won't be too—too rough?"

Sikes made no answer; he pulled open the door, and ran out into the silent streets to his home.

D. He reached home and entered his room. He shut the door and put a heavy table against it.

Nancy was lying on the bed. She had been asleep.

"Get up!" said Sikes.

"It is you, Bill," she said, with an expression of pleasure at his return.

"It is," was the reply. "Get up."

"Bill," said Nancy, in a low voice of alarm, "why do you look at me like that?"

Sikes looked at her for a few seconds. Then he seized her by the hair; he pulled her to the middle of the room and put his heavy hand upon her mouth.

"Bill, Bill!" she said. "I won't cry out—speak to me!—Tell me what I have done!"

"You know what you have done you she-devil! You were watched tonight. You were followed to London Bridge. Every word you said was heard."

"Then spare my life for the love of Heaven, as I

spared yours!" cried the girl, throwing her arms round him. "Bill, dear Bill, you cannot have the heart to kill me. Oh, think of all I have done for you! I have been true to you, Bill, upon my soul I have!"

Bill fought to get his arms free, but Nancy's arms were round his, and he could not pull them away.

"Bill," cried Nancy, trying to lay her head upon his breast. "That gentleman and the dear lady will help us—I know they will. They have given me money. Let us both leave this terrible place and lead better lives far away from here. It is never too late to be sorry for the past and to start a new life."

Sikes got one arm free and seized his pistol. But, even in his anger, he saw that, if he fired it, the shot would be heard. He held the pistol and, with all his strength, he struck the face which almost touched his own. He struck twice.

Nancy fell. She was nearly blind with blood that poured from her head. Raising herself with difficulty to her knees, she breathed one last prayer to God for mercy.

It was a terrible sight. Sikes stepped back against the wall. He shut out the sight with his hand, then he seized a heavy stick and struck her down.

Twenty-Two

SIKES ESCAPES

A. The sun rose over the city. It lit the room where the murdered woman lay.

Sikes washed himself and tried to rub his clothes clean, but there were spots that could not be removed: so he

cut out the pieces and burned them. The floor was covered with blood. Even the dog's feet had blood on them.

Then he went out, carrying the dog. He shut the door, took the key, and left the house.

He walked quickly through the city until he came to the country roads outside London. He lay down in a field and slept.

Morning and noon soon passed. Evening came and Sikes walked on, directing his steps to the north.

It was nine o'clock at night. Sikes was tired out, and the dog was hardly able to walk. He came to a village. He saw the light of the village inn and went inside. He bought some food and drink and sat down in a quiet corner by the fire with his dog.

The other men there were busy talking about their farms, and nobody noticed Sikes.

B. He was almost asleep in his corner when a man came into the room. He was one of those men who went round from village to village selling things like powder and soap and knives.

"What have you got in your box of treasures, Harry?" said one of the men. "Something good to eat?"

"Something very useful," said the fellow. "Here is the perfect thing for removing all sorts of spots. It will take the marks off your clothes or your carpets. Just rub the mark with this and it comes out at once. One penny each!"

Some of the men bought the things. The men went on talking.

"One penny each! Removes all kinds of marks—from wine, fruit, tea, water, paint or blood! Here's a mark on the hat of this gentleman. I'll take it out at once."



"No," cried Sikes. "Give that back"

LIBRARY

"Nó!" cried Sikes. "Give me that back!"

"I'll take it clean out, sir," said the man. "Gentlemen, see the dark mark on this hat. Now whether it comes from wine, fruit, tea, water, paint or blood—"

The man got no further. Sikes tore the hat from him and rushed out of the inn.

C. Sikes walked on through the village. He saw the carriage bringing the letters from London. It passed him on the road and stopped at the little village post office. As he drew nearer, Sikes could hear the guard talking to the man at the post office.

"Here's your bag of letters," said the guard. "Now, hurry up with the letters from London, will you? You're always late!"

"Is there anything new up in London?" asked the man, as he gave him the letters.

"People are talking about a murder," said the guard. "A terrible murder!"

"Man or woman?"

"A woman," said the guard. "A young woman. But I can't stay here talking all night. Goodbye to you."

The carriage drove off. Sikes went on walking. He began to feel a terrible fear. Every object on the road, every tree, every shadow, seemed like a ghost or a dead body. He seemed to see blood everywhere.

Then he imagined that Nancy was following him. He turned round and thought he saw her eyes looking at him from the shadows.

D. "I can't go on," he thought. "I can't spend another night alone in the fields. I'll go back to London. At least there'll be somebody to talk to there. And the police will

never expect me to be staying in London. I'll hide there for a week and then get away to France. Fagin will help me. I'll try it."

He began his journey back. He went by different roads and he decided to enter the city by night.

"But what about the dog?" he thought. "The police must guess that the dog is with me. They will tell about the dog in their descriptions, and that will help people to find me more easily."

He decided to drown the dog. He came near to a small river. Picking up a heavy stone, he tied it to his handkerchief. The dog looked up into his master's face.

Sikes went down to the edge of the river. The dog did not follow.

"Come here!" cried Sikes. "Do you hear me?"

The dog advanced, and then moved back.

"Come back here!" cried Sikes.

The dog stopped still for a moment, then turned, and ran away as fast as it could.

Sikes called and called, and then sat down and waited for it to return. But no dog appeared and at last Sikes continued his journey alone.

Twenty-Three

MONKS IS CAUGHT

A. Night was falling when Mr Brownlow stepped down from his carriage and knocked at his own door. Two of his servants came, and together they helped out a second man from the carriage and took him into the house. This man was Monks.

"Now," said Mr Brownlow, as they sat down. "We have much to talk about."

"How dare you bring me here like this?" said Monks. "You are my father's oldest friend: how dare you treat me like this?"

"It is because I was your father's oldest friend that I wish to talk to you," said Mr Brownlow. "It is because of my friendship with your father, and my love for his beautiful sister, your aunt. I hoped to marry her, but she died young. It is because of these past loves that I wish to talk to you, Edward Leeford."

"What has the name to do with it?" said Monks. "Leeford was my name once but I have changed it now."

"I am glad you have changed it," said Mr Brownlow. "It was once her name. I cannot forget that."

"What do you want with me?" said Mr Monks.

"You have a brother," began Mr Brownlow.

"I have no brother," said Monks. "You know I was an only child. Why do you talk to me about brothers?"

"Listen to me," said Mr Brownlow. "I know all your family history. I know of your father's unhappy marriage and how your father and mother separated. Your father was still young at the time. Later he met some new friends—a man with two beautiful daughters, one aged nineteen and the other still a baby."

"What's this to me?" asked Monks.

"Your father fell in love with the daughter of nineteen," continued Mr Brownlow. "It is a true story of grief and sorrow. Your father was then very rich. A member of the family died and left him a lot of money. Then your father died suddenly, and all his money went to his separated wife, and to you, their son."

"Well?" said Monks. "Is this all you have to tell me?"

B. "No," said Mr Brownlow slowly, fixing his eyes upon the other's face. "Your father came to see me just before he died."

"I never heard of that," said Monks.

"He came," said Mr Brownlow, "and he left with me, among some other things, a picture of this young girl whom he loved. He had painted the picture himself. He was planning to go away and he could not take it with him. He asked me to take care of it for him. He was going to take the young girl with him and go to another country. And then—he died."

Mr Brownlow stopped for a moment.

"I went to see the young girl after his death," he said, "But she had disappeared. I never saw her again. Later her child was born in the workhouse. That child was your half-brother—Oliver Twist. I did not know this until chance brought Oliver into my house."

"What?" cried Monks.

"Yes," said Mr Brownlow. "Oliver stayed with me for a time. I did not know who he was then, but I saw how like the picture he was. I began to wonder where he came from. But I need not tell you that he was taken away from me."

"I know nothing about that!" cried Monks.

"We shall see," said Mr Brownlow. "Let me continue. I lost the boy and could not find him. As his mother was dead, I knew that you alone could help me. I tried for a long time to find you."

"And now that you have found me," said Monks, getting up, "what difference does it make? You have no proofs. You think Oliver is like the picture—but that's all. You don't even know that the young girl had a child."

"I did not," said Mr Brownlow, "but in these past few weeks I have learned it all. You have a brother and you know it. Your father left a paper which your mother destroyed. This paper told of the future birth of a child and of money to be given to this child."

"Never!" shouted Monks.

"I know it all," said Mr Brownlow. "You have tried everything—every evil plan—to destroy Oliver. Did you not tell Fagin that everything that might help Oliver lay at the bottom of the river? Can you say that this is not true?"

Monks was silent.

"I shall not tell the police," said Mr Brownlow, "but you must see that Oliver, as your brother, gets his part of the money. I shall give you some papers to sign. And then you may go where you please. Do you agree?"

C. Monks, torn by fear and hatred, walked up and down the room. He could not speak.

The door opened and Mr Grimwig came in.

"News of the murder," he said. "The man will be taken tonight, they think. His dog has been seen by the police. The government has offered a hundred pounds for him."

"I will give fifty more," said Mr Brownlow. "What of Fagin? Where is he?"

"He has not been taken yet," said Mr Grimwig. "But he will be. They are sure of him. I am quite certain that the police will take him this week!"

Monks looked at the two men in terror.

"Mr Bumble has arrived," continued Mr Grimwig. "He is downstairs. Will you see him now?"

"Yes, in one moment," said Mr Brownlow. He turned

to Monks. "Have you decided?" he said in a low voice. "Do you agree to what I said?"

"Yes, yes, I agree," said Monks. "You will keep everything secret?"

"I will," said Mr Brownlow. "You must stay in this house for the present. If you want to be safe, this is your only hope."

Mr Grimwig led Mr Bumble into the room.

"I am very glad to see you, sir," said Mr Bumble to Mr Brownlow. "And how is our dear little Oliver? I always loved that boy like a son. Dear Oliver!"

"Now," said Mr Brownlow, pointing to Monks, "do you know this person, Mr Bumble?"

"No," said Mr Bumble.

"Are you quite sure?"

"I never saw him in all my life."

"Nor sold him anything?"

"No."

"You never saw, perhaps, a certain gold ornament and ring, which one of your old workhouse women kept?"

"No indeed," answered Mr Bumble. "Why have I been brought here to answer to such nonsense as this?"

"Mr Bumble," said Mr Brownlow. "You need not continue to pretend like this. Monks has told us everything."

Mr Bumble knew that he must tell the truth.

"All right," he said. "I did receive some money from this man. The ornament and the ring are somewhere where you'll never get them. What then?"

"Nothing," said Mr Brownlow, "except that this proves that you are not a trustworthy person. You are not fit to be master of the workhouse. We shall see that you are removed from the office. Good day to you."

Twenty-Four

THE DEATH OF SIKES

A. Jacob's Island lies in the Thames, where the river flows through one of the lowest, dirtiest and poorest parts of London. The old houses there are empty and without roofs; the walls are falling down; the doors are falling into the streets; the chimneys are black, but they give out no more smoke.

Toby Crackit and Charley Bates were hiding in one of these old houses. They were talking together in frightened voices.

"When was Fagin taken?" asked Toby.

"Just at dinner-time today. I escaped up the chimney," said Charley.

"And Bet?"

"Poor Bet! They took her to see the body, to say who it was," said Charley. "She went off like a mad person, crying and shouting and beating her head against the wall. They took her to hospital."

"They'll hang Fagin, and Sikes too when they get him," said Toby. "I tell you, Charley, we're in real danger."

"No one will find us here," said Charley.

As they sat talking, a noise was heard on the stairs, and Sikes's dog came running into the room.

"What's the meaning of this?" said Toby. "Sikes can't be coming here, can he? I—I hope not."

"If he decided to come here, he'd have come with the dog," said Charley. "Here! Give me some water for the poor beast. I think he has run a long way."

The dog drank every drop of water, then got under a chair and went straight off to sleep.

"You don't think," said Toby, "that Sikes has told anyone about this house, do you? I don't feel safe here any more. Do you think we should go?"

"No. We're all right here," said Charley.

"Do you think Sikes has killed himself?" asked Toby.

"No," said Charley. "If he had, the dog would want to lead us to where he did it. No, I think he has got out of the country and left the dog behind."

B. It was now dark. They lit a candle and put it on the table. They drew their chairs closer together, moving with surprise and fear at every sound. They spoke little, and only in whispers; they seemed as silent and afraid as if the body of the murdered woman lay in the next room.

Suddenly there was a knock at the door below. Toby ran to the window and looked out. His white face was enough to tell Bates who it was. The dog too jumped up and ran to the door.

"We must let him in," said Charley, taking up a candle. "We can't do anything else."

Sikes came in. His face looked old and tired; he had a beard of three days' growth; he breathed quickly and with difficulty; it seemed as if he was the ghost of Sikes.

He sat down. There was a silence. Then he spoke.

"How did that dog come here?"

"Alone. About two hours ago," said Charley.

"The paper tonight says that Fagin has been taken. Is it true?"

"True," said Charley.

They were silent again.

"Curse you both!" said Sikes, passing his hand over his face. "Have you nothing to say to me?"

Neither of them answered.

"What do you mean to do?" said Sikes. "Do you intend to sell me to the police or let me lie here till the hunt is over? Come! I want an answer."

"You may stop here if you think it's safe," said Crackit. There was another silence. Then Sikes spoke.

"Has—it—the body—been put in the ground?"

They shook their heads.

"Why hasn't it?" cried Sikes. "Why do they keep such ugly things above the ground?"

"You devil!" shouted Charley Bates. "I'm not afraid of you! Toby may let you stay here, but I'm not going to help you."

Sikes threw him to the floor. His knee was on Charley's neck when a loud knocking was heard. There were lights outside, and voices.

"Open that door in the name of the law!" cried the voices.

"They're here! They've found us!" whispered Toby, white with terror.

"Do your worst!" shouted Sikes. He picked up Charley from the floor. "Here, where can I put this boy, Crackit?"

They took Charley downstairs and shut him in a room.

"There!" said Sikes. "That will teach the young devil to shout at me like that."

C. The voices outside grew louder. Some of the crowd were trying to climb the wall. Some cried out for ladders, others said they would set the house on fire. The crowd waved like a field of corn moved by an angry wind.

"The tide!" cried Sikes. "The tide was in as I came

up. Give me a rope, Toby, a long rope. The people are all at the front of the house. I'll drop down at the back. Give me a rope quickly or I shall do two more murders and then kill myself."

Toby gave him a rope. He went to the top of the house. He climbed to the edge of the roof and looked over.

The water was out and the bed of the river was just one long piece of soft wet ground.

The crowd outside shouted as Sikes appeared on the roof. At the same time he heard noises inside the house. People were entering.

Sikes tied one end of the rope round the chimney. He tied the other end round himself.

"I can let myself down nearly to the ground," he thought, "and then I can cut the rope and drop. I've got my knife ready in my hand."

At that moment he looked behind him on the roof, threw his arms above his head and gave a shout of terror.

"Those eyes again!" he cried. "I can still see her eyes!"

He fell back and dropped from the roof. The rope was round his neck. He fell for thirty-five feet, and then there was a sudden stop. There he hung and swung against the wall—dead.

Twenty-Five

THE END OF THE STORY

A. Fagin sat in prison. Looking at the ground, he tried to collect his thoughts. After a while he began to remember a few words of what the judge had said to him:

To be hanged by the neck till he was dead."

As it grew dark he began to think of all the men he had known who had died in this way. Some of them had died because of him. There were so many that he could hardly count them. He had seen some of them die, and he had laughed at them because they died with prayers on their lips. And what a strange death! They dropped suddenly, and changed from strong and healthy men to hanging heaps of clothes!

Some of them must have stayed here in this prison. It was like being in a grave full of dead bodies. "Light! Light!" He beat his hands against the heavy door. "Light!"

At last a man came with a candle.

The night passed in silence, broken only by the church clocks striking. The sound of every iron bell brought him the same message—Death.

The day came. Day? There was no day: it was gone as soon as it came. Night fell again: a night so long and yet so short—long in its terrible silence and short in its hastening hours.

Once he shouted like a mad creature; another time he cried and tore his hair. Men of his own religion came to pray beside him; but he beat them off.

B. Monday morning came. It was the last day of his life. He sat there on his bed. His red hair hung down upon his white face. His beard was torn and twisted. His eyes shone with a terrible light.

Then two officers of the prison came to see him. They were followed by Mr Brownlow and Oliver.

"Is the young gentleman to come in too?" said one of the officers to Mr Brownlow. "It's not a sight for children, sir."



Then two officers of the prison came to see him

"It is not indeed, my friend," answered Mr Brownlow, "but my business with this man has much to do with the child. Oliver has seen this man in the evil days of his success; I think that, even at the price of some pain and fear, he ought to see him now."

They went in.

"What do you want here?" shouted Fagin.

"You have some papers," said Mr Brownlow. "A man called Monks gave you some papers. We want to know where they are."

"It's a lie!" shouted Fagin. "I haven't any papers—not one!"

"For the love of God," said Mr Brownlow, "do not say that now. You are very near death. You know that Sikes is dead and that Monks has told me everything. Where are those papers?"

"Oliver!" cried Fagin. "Here! Here! Let me whisper to you."

"I am not afraid," said Oliver in a low voice, as he let go of Mr Brownlow's hand and went up to Fagin.

"The papers," said Fagin, drawing Oliver towards him, "are in a bag in a hole a little way up the chimney in the top front room. I want to talk to you, my dear. I want to talk to you."

"Yes, yes," said Oliver. "Let me say a prayer. Do let me say one prayer. Say a prayer upon your knees, with me."

"Outside! Outside!" replied Fagin, pushing the boy to the door. "We'll pray together outside, my dear. Take me out of here first. You can get me out."

"God forgive this man!" cried Oliver with a burst of tears.

The door of the prison opened.

The officers laid hands upon Fagin. He fought like a mad beast and then sent up a cry that rang out even beyond the prison walls.

Mr Brownlow and Oliver left the prison. Oliver nearly fainted after this terrible visit, and he was so weak that for an hour or more, he had not the strength to walk.

C. Our story is nearly over. We can finish it in a few simple words.

After Fagin's death, Master Charley Bates decided that, after all, an honest life was best. He turned his back on the dark days of the past and began a new and happy life, working for a farmer.

Monks went to America; he wasted all his money there and died in prison.

Mr Brownlow took Oliver to live with him as his son. With old Mrs Bedwin, they moved to a house in the country. Their house was about a mile away from the house where Mrs Maylie and Rose lived.

Mr Giles and Brittles still stayed there as servants to Mrs Maylie. Dr Losberne went back to Chertsey, but, after a few months, he decided that the air there did not agree with him, so he moved to the village too. Mr Grimwig often came down from London to visit them all.

It was a great joy for young Oliver to have his good friends so near him. They were all really happy, enjoying one another's company and thanking God, whose love and mercy protected and blessed them.

A WORD TO THE TEACHERS

1. Exercises to the lessons could not be made exhaustive for want of space. The teachers may add a few questions to each exercise on the pattern of the first four or five lessons.
2. Some of the questions aim at assessing the knowledge of the students, whereas the others make the students think for themselves. The teachers may set such questions as would test the memory as well as the creativity of the students.
3. Teachers may, through their ingenuity, add to the lessons more exercises on applied grammar.
4. They may ask the students to consolidate the list of the new words and phrases to be used in sentences. This procedure will help the students to grasp the words and phrases more quickly.
5. They should try to get the answers to the questions in various exercises from the students patiently. They should avoid dictating answers.
6. Questions on the 'text' should be such as can have precise answers.
7. The teachers should acquaint themselves with the formation of really good objective-type questions. This is the modern technique of testing. Two examples of objective-type questions have been given at the end of the last lesson.

NOTES AND EXERCISES

CHARLES DICKENS

(1812—1870)

Charles Dickens is the most popular English novelist and humorist. He was born of poor parents. His father, John Dickens, was a clerk in the Navy Pay Office.

His early life was very unhappy. His father ran into heavy debts by overspending and was sent to prison. Charles had to work in a dirty, rat-ridden blacking factory to support the family when he was only eleven.

He suffered many hardships in childhood and could not get regular school education. He was kept at home to do odd jobs. He picked up his education in the 'hard school of experience', as he wandered up and down the streets of London in abject poverty and misery. Even at that tender age, he was left to look after himself with 'no advice, no counsel, no encouragement, . . . no support from any one'.

He was a child of marked abilities and had a keen power of observation. At about fifteen, he became a clerk in a lawyer's office. He did not like the job much. So after eighteen months, he got out and started working as a parliamentary reporter. This opportunity helped him to make a name for himself in journalism.

Charles Dickens's first attempt at writing was Sketches by Boz. These sketches were little pictures of life and manners, as he saw them. These sketches led directly to

the world of *Oliver Twist*. *Pickwick* gave Charles Dickens the first place as an English comic writer. Among his important novels are *David Copperfield*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Great Expectations*, *Hard Times* and *Oliver Twist*.

Oliver Twist is a protest against human misery. It has a serious purpose. It is a reaction to the hilarity of *Pickwick*, which presents the light side of life.

Oliver Twist is a contrast between two worlds—the world of crime and the world of goodness. Fagin, Sikes and Bumble represent the forces of evil, whereas Miss Rose, Mr Brownlow, and Dr Losberne represent the forces of goodness. The forces of evil appear to be as powerful as those of goodness. Whenever Oliver gets the happiness of a loving family, there is always something to destroy it. But goodness cannot be defeated for all times. Nancy is Oliver's joy-killer, but at last saves him from ruin. Fagin is every inch a rogue, but tells about all the secret papers to Oliver on the last day of his life and wants Oliver to say a prayer upon his knees with him.

Death and violence are common in the novel, but the teaching of the novel is that it is only in love that human beings can live purposefully and happily with one another. It is love that holds together Oliver's progress throughout the novel. Forces of good may proceed slowly, but they triumph in the long run.

It is true that Dickens's novels are neither works of instruction nor of propaganda, but they bring out the active public problems of his times. He is concerned about law reforms in *Bleak House* and about juvenile crime, prostitution and the poor law in *Oliver Twist*.

Noble as Dickens was, he was deeply concerned about man's responsibility. His great genius, coupled with nobility of his heart and his first-hand knowledge, enabled him to champion the cause of the poor and the downtrodden. He wrote of the everyday lives of the common people with great sympathy, pathos and humour. Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, Munshi Prem Chand, and Mulk Raj Anand, the great Indian novelists, were greatly influenced by Charles Dickens's real and living interest in the actual world about him.

OLIVER TWIST (Story in brief)

Leeford was a rich man. He had an unhappy marriage. A son was born to the couple. He was named Edward. He and his wife separated. Leeford fell in love with another girl—Agnes. But he suddenly died. Agnes gave birth to Oliver in a workhouse. Soon after, Agnes also died. Oliver was thus left alone.

From the workhouse, he was taken to a poor-house for children (Orphanage). Mrs Mann looked after these children. But she was dishonest. She gave them very little food. When Oliver was nine he was taken by Bumble to the workhouse again. Oliver was more unhappy there.

The boys in the workhouse got only three little meals of thin soup every day. They had a small piece of bread only on Sundays. All the boys, therefore, suffered from a terrible hunger. One day, they all chose Oliver to ask for more soup. He did it. Instead of the soup, he got a terri-

ble beating and was shut up in a dark room. At last he was given over to Sowerberry—a coffin-maker.

Here, too, Oliver was very unhappy. One day, Noah Claypole - another working with Sowerberry - abused Oliver's dead mother. Oliver was red with anger. He threw Noah to the ground. Then they all beat him mercilessly. At night, he wept and wept. Next morning he got up early and left Sowerberry's shop.

He did not know where to go. He took the road to London. He had only a penny with him. He took seven days to reach the city. He was very much tired and hungry. Jack Dawkins met him on the way. He offered him something to eat and drink and took him to Fagin's house late in the night.

Fagin's house was a house (den) of thieves. They committed all kinds of crimes. Fagin gave them training in pick-pocketing. Oliver, too, got this training. One day he went out with Dawkins and Charles Bates. They pick-pocketed Mr Brownlow—a noble old gentleman. Oliver was also standing there. They ran away but Oliver was caught. Another person, who had seen Dawkins and Bates pick-pocketing, stated that Oliver was innocent. Mr Brownlow took him home. He and Mrs Bedwin were kind to Oliver and looked after him so well. Fagin was anxious to bring Oliver back. Nancy was put on this 'business' and and she cleverly succeeded. Oliver again was back among the thieves.

Fagin and his close friend, Sikes, planned to steal silver from a house at Chertsey. Oliver was put into the house through a small window late in the night. The servants of the house woke up and fired. Sikes and Toby ran away.

Oliver was wounded and was left behind. It was raining and was terribly cold. Next morning, Oliver got up with a terrible pain. He knocked at the nearest house to find some shelter. It was the same house they had entered last night. The servants recognized him. But the ladies of the house Miss Rose and Mrs Maylie were kind to Oliver. They called a doctor and he soon got well.

Now Monks - (Edward Leeford, half-brother of Oliver) came into the picture. He was to share his money with Oliver. So he wanted to make an end of him. He put Fagin on this mission. Nancy came to know of this plan. She told all the secrets about Fagin, Sikes and Oliver to Miss Rose. She (Miss Rose) took Oliver to Mr Brownlow and told him the whole thing. He wanted to save Oliver's life.

Mr Brownlow found out Monks. He was the son of Leeford whom he knew so well. He made him agree to share his money with Oliver.

Fagin and Sikes learnt that Nancy had told Mr Brownlow all about them; so Sikes, whom she so much loved and served, murdered her. Sikes ran away from London, but returned after a day to jump down the roof of a house.

Fagin was taken to prison and was hanged. Mr Brownlow took Oliver as his son. Monks went to America and died in a prison. Bates began a new and happy life working on a farm. All of Oliver's good friends were living near him. They were all really happy, enjoying one another's company and thanking God for His mercy and blessings.

1. OLIVER'S EARLY LIFE

Oliver Twist was born in a workhouse—a house for poor people. His mother died just after his birth. She was quite young and good looking. She was not married. Oliver was thus without his parents from his very birth.

He was sent to another house where twenty or thirty other poor children lived. Mrs Mann looked after these children. She was dishonest. She gave them very little food. So they were always hungry.

When Oliver was nine years old, Mr Bumble took him back to the workhouse—the place where he was born.

II. Look at this sentence :-

You are too young to die ;

Fill in the blanks with words given—late, drink, abuse, walk.

1. You are too weak to _____.
2. I am too _____ to catch the train.
3. Milk is too hot to _____.
4. She is too nice to _____.

III. Use the following in sentences of your own :

Let, hold out, in front, look after, at all, nasty.

IV. Make sentences to show the difference between the two words in each pair :-

Dying, dyeing; died, dead; lie, lay; rise, raise; few, a few.

V. Use look, drink and cry as nouns.

Use work as a noun, as a verb and as an adjective.

VI. Who said these words and on what occasion ?

“Oliver Twist is now too old to stay here, we have decided to have him back in the workhouse. I have come to take him there.”

VII. Fill in the blanks with the proper forms of the verbs given in the brackets.

1. The mother _____ out her hand towards the child (hold).
2. The boys had never _____ a kind word (know).
3. She _____ back and _____ (fall, die).
4. You were _____ in a dark room (keep).
5. She will never _____ you (find).
6. I have _____ three rupees (get).
7. She will _____ to _____ (cry, begin).

VIII. Answer the following questions :

1. Where was Oliver Twist born ?
2. What did the mother do just before she died ?
3. What was Mrs Mann's duty ?
4. How old was Oliver when he was taken back to the workhouse?
5. Who was Mr Bumble ?

2. OLIVER ASKS FOR MORE

Oliver had never known a kind word or a kind look from any person in the poor children's house. So he was not happy there. But in the workhouse, he was more unhappy. He had to work. This made him hungrier. He got practically nothing to eat. He got only three little meals of thin soup every day and a small piece of bread only on Sundays.

Oliver Twist and his friends got wild with hunger. They chose Oliver Twist to ask for more soup. He went to the master with his bowl and begged for some more soup.

This was too much for the master. Oliver was shut up in a dark room. He was beaten by Mr Bumble with a stick every day. He was at last given over to Mr Sowerberry a coffin-maker.

II. Translate into Panjabi or Hindi.

1. I am sure the boy will live to be hanged.

2. That's just the thing I wanted to speak to you about.
3. When the boys had eaten their soup and cleaned their bowls, they sat looking at the pot with eager eyes as if they could have eaten all the soup in it.

III. Look at the sentence :-

He was so weak that he could not walk.

Fill in the blanks with words given : ugly, poor, loves, hear.

1. I am so _____ that I cannot pay my fees.
2. She is so _____ that no body wants to marry her.
3. You are so good that every body _____ you.
4. Gopal spoke so low that nobody could _____.

IV. Use the following in sentences of your own :-
a lot, unless, at length, hardly, afraid of.

V. Study the following sentences :

He was a clever boy. He was made the monitor of the class.
Complete the sentences with the help of the verbs given below:-
feed, beat, choose, shut, offer, take.

1. The hungry persons _____ on 'puris'.
2. Gopal _____ the leader of the class.
3. Oliver _____ with a stick every day.
4. The naughty boy _____ in a dark room.
5. He was _____ to task.
6. A five-rupee note _____ to the clerk.

VI. Who said these words to whom and at what occasion ?

"Well, well, Mr Bumble", he said.

"It's the food which people eat in the workhouse that helps to make the coffins so narrow and small."

VII. Answer the following Questions :

1. Why did Oliver ask the 'master' for more soup ?
(two sentences).
2. What did the 'master' do in reply ?
3. Who took away Oliver from the workhouse ?
4. What did this man make ?

3. HE GOES OUT TO WORK

Oliver had now to work at Mr Sowerberry's shop. He (Sowerberry) made his living by making coffins. Oliver was so unhappy. He felt that everybody hated him. He had to sleep in the shop, which was full of the smell of coffins. His own bed looked like a grave. He wished he could have slept there for ever. He was to work under Noah Claypole—another boy working with Sowerberry. He was always rude to him. He sometimes abused him and hit him.

II. Read the following sentences carefully:

He knew who his parents were.

Fill in the blanks with the following words:

loved, could, was, were.

1. I did not know what his name _____.
2. Mohan told that you _____ in the wrong.
3. He asked me if I _____ lend him my pen.
4. He felt that everybody _____ him.

III. Use the following in sentences of your own:

rather, to take care of, for ever, knock, in front of, too much, rude.

IV. Who said these words and on what occasion?

"Everybody lets him alone. Both his father and mother let him alone and all his family, too."

V. Translate into Panjabi or Hindi.

There he was _____ alone in a strange place, with no friends, no one to love or take care of him. His heart was heavy.

VI. Answer the following questions:

1. Whose food was given to Oliver?
2. Where was Oliver asked to sleep in the night?
3. Under whom will Oliver work?
4. What was Noah's father?
5. Who was Charlotte?

4. HE RUNS AWAY

One day Noah abused Oliver's dead mother. Oliver could not bear this insult. Red with anger, he seized Noah by the neck, shook him and threw him to the ground. At this, Mrs Sowerberry, Noah, Charlotte, all beat him mercilessly, and shut him up in a dark room.

At night when he was left alone in the shop, he wept and wept. At the first light of the day, he opened the door and left the shop for the open street.

II. Make sentences using the following:

A great deal, as soon as, set on fire, no longer, at once, come of, come off, until.

III. Use the following words as verbs :

pity, notice, like, cry, look, hit, pain, result, force, order.

IV. Read the following sentences:

Noah made Oliver's life unpleasant.

Fill in the blanks with the words given below:

unhappy, unfortunate, undo, unwell.

1. I was _____ to learn that he had failed.

2. It is _____ that you broke your leg.

3. He said "I am _____ today".

4. I could not _____ the wrong done.

V. Who said these words to whom and on what occasion?

You have given him too much to eat. If you had fed him only on soup, as we did in the workhouse, this would never have happened.

VI. Read the following sentence :-

You/had/better/keep/silent/

Now put each of the following groups of words in the third column and read the sentences you get.

leave the house

work hard
not said so
run away
stand like a rock

Note :-Don't put 'to' after better.

VII. Answer the following questions :

1. Who made life unhappy for Oliver?
2. Who were against Oliver?
3. Why did Oliver throw Noah to the ground?
4. Was anybody in favour of Oliver?
5. What advice did Bumble give to Mrs Sowerberry about Oliver.

5. HE GOES TO LONDON

Oliver took a road to London. It was seventy miles to that city. He had only one penny with him. It took him seven days to walk to London. He was very hungry and tired. He met a boy—Jack Dawkins on the way. He offered him something to eat and something to drink. He took him late in the night to the house of Mr Fagin. He was looking at a line on which a large number of silk handkerchiefs were hanging.

II. Make sentences showing that you understand the differences between the two words in each of the following pairs of words :
beside, besides ; quiet, quite ; hard, hardly ; nearly, near; since, for; refused, denied; week, weak.

III. Use the following in sentences of your own:
in front of; at length; ought to; a few; many a; all the time.

IV. Answer the following questions :

1. What did the doctor say about Dick ?
2. How far was it to London ?
3. How far did Oliver travel on the first day ?
4. Whom did Oliver meet on the way to London on the seventh day?
5. What things were hanging on the line ?

V. Translate into Panjabi/Hindi :

As the days passed he grew weaker. A man gave him a meal of bread and cheese, and an old lady gave him food and some kind words. Without this, Oliver's troubles would have ended in the same way as his mother's : he would have fallen dead on the road.

6. FAGIN AND COMPANY

Oliver was now in a den (house) of thieves. Fagin was their ring-leader. Jack Dawkins and Charley Bates were pick-pockets. Fagin gave them regular training in pick-pocketing. Bet and Nancy were evil women.

II. Use 'bread' as an adjective; 'half' as an adverb; 'long' as a verb; and 'book' as an adjective.

III. Use the following in sentences of your own :
any longer, to get out of sight; till, a great deal; unless; while, without; laugh at.

IV. Look at the following sentence

Here's a wretch for you.

Complete the following sentences with the words given below :
five-rupee note, book, pen, write, a cinema ticket

1. Here's a _____ you may read it.
2. Here's a _____ you may _____ with it.
3. Here's a _____ you can buy _____.

V. Who said these words and on what occasion ?

"What a wonderful idea it is to hang men;"

He said aloud to himself. "Dead men can never be sorry. Dead men can never talk. Ah, it is fine for our business."

VI. Translate the above lines into Panjabi or Hindi.

VII. Answer the following questions :

1. What was Fagin's business ? (Three sentences)

2. What did Dawkins give to Fagin ?
3. What did Charley Bates give to Fagin ?
4. What strange game did Fagin and the two boys play ?
(Five sentences)

7. OLIVER JOINS THE THIEVES

Oliver, too, got the training of pick-pocketing from Fagin. One day Oliver went out with Dawkins and Charley Bates. The two other boys pick-pocketed Mr Brownlow, a gentleman when he was examining a book in front of a book-shop. Oliver was surprised. They both ran away. Oliver stood still for a moment. But then he, too, began to run.

The gentleman found his handkerchief missing. Everybody took Oliver for a thief. The policeman seized him by the neck and dragged him along the street. Suddenly the owner of the book-shop came at the scene. He told the whole story. Oliver was, therefore, let off. The gentleman took him home.

Fagin, and Bill Sikes—another friend of him—were anxious to find out Oliver as soon as possible, lest he should get them into trouble. At last, Nancy was able to find out that Oliver was with Mr. Brownlow.

II. Use in sentences of your own the following words or phrases :
get out, at all, suddenly, of course, at last, get up, no longer.

III. Use as verbs the following :

cry, dress, own, face, place, look, pity, watch

IV. Fill in the blanks with the following words :
coal, a child, ice, blood, fire

1. As black as _____.
2. As hot as _____.
3. As cold as _____.
4. As red as _____.
5. As innocent as _____.

V Describe in ten sentences how Mr. Brownlow was pick-pocketed and how Oliver was let off ?

VI Why was Bill Sikes anxious to find Oliver ?

8. HE FINDS A BETTER HOME

Mr Brownlow and the old lady, Mrs Bedwin, were kind to Oliver. They looked after him so well. There was a picture hanging in Mrs Bedwin's room. It was so much like him (This was the picture of his mother). He was very much interested in that picture.

One day, Oliver was telling Mr Brownlow all about himself. Just then Mr Grimwig, a friend of Mr Brownlow, came there. He looked at Oliver. He knew that Brownlow was too noble a man. He told him that Oliver was a cheat and he should not trust him.

Mr Brownlow was to return some books to the book-shop so he sent away Mr Oliver to deliver the books and some money at the shop. He wanted to prove to Mr Grimwig that Oliver was trustworthy.

II. Use in sentences of your own the following words or groups of words :

unless, look after, a little, trust, owe, out of sight, bear, as long as.

III. Make sentences to show the differences between two words in each of the following pairs :

Expect, except ; bare, bear ; return as verb and as a noun ; smile, laugh.

IV. Draw up a dialogue of about ten sentences between Oliver and Mrs Bedwin about the picture.

V. What did Mr Grimwig say to Mr Brownlow about Oliver ?

VI. Where did Oliver go with the books and the five-pound note ?

VII. Who said these words and on what occasion ?

"You may go, my dear," he said to Oliver. "Tell the man at the bookshop that you have brought these books back, and that you have come to pay the four pounds ten which I owe him. Here is a five-pound note. You must bring me back ten shillings".

9. BACK AMONG THE THIEVES

Oliver came near the book-shop. He heard a young woman shouting out in a loud voice—"Oh my dear brother". In a moment he saw that she had thrown her arms round his neck. It was Nancy. She was pretending to be his sister and she was saying that he was a bad boy and had run away from his poor parents. Bill Sikes with his dog was also there to help Nancy. Oliver was crying helplessly 'I don't belong to them'. But nobody would hear him. So Oliver was dragged to Fagin's house.

They all teased him. They took away the books and the five-pound note. He begged Fagin to send the books and the money back to Mr Brownlow. But they all laughed at what he said. Oliver jumped to his feet and ran away from the room. Fagin and others ran after him and brought him back.

II. Use in sentences of your own :

almost, to break heart, belong to, at the top of his voice, to go mad.

III. Look at the sentence :

Make him come home.

Fill in the blanks with the words given below :

the game, the book, dry, live, write.

1. Make her _____ her hair.
2. Make her play _____.
3. Make the boy read _____.
4. Make her _____ a letter.
5. Don't make me _____ such a life.

IV. Answer the following questions :

1. Who brought Oliver back to Fagin ?
2. What did Nancy pretend to be ?
3. Why did Sikes say that the five-pound note was his ?
4. Who was in favour of Oliver among the whole set of thieves ?

V. Who said these words, on what occasion and to whom ?

"They belong to the good, kind old gentleman who took me to his house and looked after me when I was so ill. Please send them back. Send him back the books and the money."

VI. Translate into Panjabi/Hindi.

"So you wanted to get away, my dear, did you ?" he said, taking up a stick which lay in a corner. "You wanted to get help, did you ? You meant to send for the police perhaps ? We'll stop that."

10. A NEW PLAN

Mr Brownlow and Mrs Bedwin were sad for Oliver and so was Oliver when he thought of his kind friends. Fagin kept Oliver shut up in the house for about a week. Fagin and Sikes now planned to steal silver from a house at Chertsey. Oliver was to be put into the house through a small window.

11. Use in sentences of your own the following words or phrases :
in short, never, listen to, run cold, all the time, knock at, take off, at all, win over, give up.

III. Read the sentence :

The dog had been deceived by the coat.

Fill in the blanks with words given below :
with, friend, washed, been.

1. The clothes were _____ by the washerman.
2. Oliver was beaten _____ a stick.
3. I have _____ cheated by my _____

IV. Use the following words as nouns and as verbs :
plan, place, help, interest, drink.

V. Answer the following questions :

1. What did Bumble tell Mr Brownlow about Oliver ?
2. Why could not the servants be won over ?
3. What was Toby Crackit doing near the house ?
4. What extra reward did Bill ask for doing the 'work' ?
5. What was Nancy to do ?

VI. To whom did Fagin say these words and on what occasion ?

"They are of no use to me," said Fagin. "They look like thieves. But the this boy's face is different. Besides, if he escapes again, he has us in his power, so he must be one of us and work with us."

II. OLIVER AND SIKES

Oliver was on his knees and praying to God when Nancy came to fetch Oliver to Sikes's house. Sikes loaded his pistol and frightened Oliver in every possible way. They both set out on a journey the next day. At last, they reached a lonely place. Toby Crackit was staying there. Late in the night at half-past one, Sikes and Toby took their way and went out on their 'work' and took Oliver with them.

II. Use in sentences of your own the following words and phrases :
turn red, although, piece, hardly, fall asleep, make a noise.

III. Fill in the blanks with words given below :

rain, lit, raining, light, hard, hardly

1. There was no _____ in the room.
2. We had no _____ last year.
3. He worked _____ but failed.
4. I had _____ left the house when it started _____.
5. He _____ the lamp.

IV. Answer the following questions :

1. What was Oliver doing when Nancy came to fetch him ?

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2. What will Sikes do if he (Oliver) speaks ?
 3. What things did they carry with them to Chertsey ?
 4. At what time in the night did they leave ?
 5. What kind of book did Oliver read ?
- V. Translate into Panjabi/Hindi. —
- Sikes and the boy hastened through the city. The day broke as they reached the country roads. In the afternoon they came to a small town. They arrived at an old inn and Sikes ordered some dinner by the kitchen fire. Afterwards, Sikes smoked his pipe and Oliver was so tired that he fell asleep.

12. THE VISIT TO CHERTSEY

The two thieves went out with Oliver between them: They soon reached the house from where they had to steal. Oliver saw their game and wanted to run away. But he was kept back at the point of a pistol.

Oliver was put into the house through a window. He thought of waking the family, but Sikes shouted at him to come back. At this the servants woke up. They exchanged shots. Oliver was wounded. The servants followed them. But Sikes and Toby ran away and left Oliver behind.

- II. Who said these words, on what occasion and to whom ?
- “Oh, please let me go. Let me run away and die in the fields. I will never come near London, never ‘never’. Oh, pray have mercy on me and do not make me steal.”
- III. Look at the following sentences :
- If you don't open it I shall shoot you at once.
If I had caught the thieves, I would have murdered them.
Now complete the sentences in any way you like.
1. If he does not work hard _____.
 2. If you don't walk fast _____.
 3. If it rains, _____.

4. If I had passed the examination _____.
5. If the doctor had come in time _____.
6. If the train had not been late _____.

IV. Fill in the blanks with words given in brackets :

1. He went up only three _____ of the _____ (steps, stairs) .
2. He was more _____ than _____ (alive, dead) .
3. I was _____ so I _____ (rested, tired) .
4. She _____ on the wet bed sheet, so she _____ the child on her breast (lay, laid) .

V. Answer the following questions :

1. Who took the pistol away from Sikes ?
2. Why did Oliver want to run away and die ?
3. Who pulled out Oliver through the window ?
4. Who were Mr. Giles and Brittles ?
5. Why did Sikes and Toby leave Oliver back.

VI. Translate the following passage into Panjabi or Hindi.

"Now listen," whispered Sikes to Oliver, taking a lamp from his pocket and lighting it. "I'm going to put you through there. Take this light, go up the steps and along the little hall to the door. Open it and let us in."

13. OLIVER IS SAFE AGAIN

Oliver was wounded. Next morning he got up with a cry of pain. It was raining fast and he knocked at a house across the field. This was the house they had entered last night. The servants of the house—Mr. Giles and Brittles—recognized him. They informed the ladies of the house who were kind. They asked them to call a doctor. Oliver soon got well.

- II. Use the following words and phrases in sentences of your own :
get up, of no use, escape, listen to, get out, quietly.

III. Fill in the blanks with words given in brackets :

1. I _____ on the table. I did not _____ on the ground (lie, lay).
2. He did not _____ what to do. He _____ that I was ill (know, knew).
3. You _____ at the bird. He did not have a _____ at you (look, looked).

IV. Translate into Panjabi/Hindi.

They advanced slowly towards the door with the dogs in front. Brittles opened it and all they saw was poor little Oliver Twist on the step.

V. Give an account of the incident during the night in about fifteen sentences in the words of Mr Giles.

Example : It was about half-past ten. I heard a noise. I woke up. I thought it was a dream.....

VI. Who said these words and on what occasion ?

"Here he is" he shouted up the stairs. "Here's one of the thieves, madam ! Here he is ! I shot him, madam, and Brittles held the light".

14. ANOTHER NEW HOME

Oliver was quite comfortable in this house. Miss Rose and her aunt, Mrs Maylie, looked after him very well. They took pity on him and did not send him to prison. They took him to the country. There he helped them in the garden and worked at his lessons, too. So Oliver was really happy.

II. Use : 'well' as an adjective, as a noun and as an adverb.

'harm' as a noun and as a verb.

'end' as a verb and as a noun.

'pain' as a noun and as a verb.

III. Use in sentences :

instead of, rather, expect, except, as well as, get up, look after

IV. Who said these words, on what occasion and to whom ?

"How young he is ! He may never have known a mother's love or the joy of a comfortable home. Oh ! aunt, dear aunt, have pity on him. Do not let them take this sick child to prison."

V. Answer the following questions :

1. How old was Rose Maylie ?
2. How long did the doctor stay in Giles's room ?
3. Why did Rose not want Oliver to be taken to prison ?
4. What did Oliver do 'in the country' ?
5. What did Mr Giles feel ashamed to say ?

VI. Translate into Panjabi/Hindi.

Their talk was a long one. Oliver told them the story of his life, and was often forced to stop, because of the pain and his weak condition. It was sad to hear the low voice of a sick child, telling of all evil things he had suffered and of the terrible things which hard men had done to him.

15. A STRANGE MYSTERY

Oliver was getting stronger, happier, and healthier all the time. But Miss Rose fell seriously ill. Oliver was sent to the nearest inn to post a letter to Dr Losberne. At the inn, he fell against a tall young man in a black coat (Monks-his half-brother).

After a long time, Rose got well. But she was weak and could not go out for walks. So Oliver spent his time in his own little room working at his lessons.

One evening he had been reading for a long while. He felt tired and half asleep. He saw Fagin and Monks standing by his window. He got frightened and called for help. All searched for them but no body was there.

- II. Give the comparative and superlative degrees of :
strong, healthy, beautiful, happy, long, little, good, bad
- III. Use the following in sentences of your own :
A little, the little, little, make up, as fast as, for hours, mistake as a noun, mistake as a verb, each other.
- IV. Translate into Panjabi or Hindi.
Good heaven ! what was that.... stood the very man who had met him outside the inn.
- V. Answer the following questions :-
 1. What was Miss Rose suffering from ?
 2. To whom did Mrs Maylie write a letter ?
 3. What did the Doctor say about the recovery of Miss Rose at the end ?
 4. Whom did Oliver see through the window of his room ?
 5. Where did Mr Giles and others search the two strangers ?
- VI. Who said these words and on what occasion ?
"It is hard", he said turning away as he spoke. "So young, so much loved; but there is very little hope."

16. MR BUMBLE AND THE STRANGER

The stranger (Mr Monk) came to Mr Bumble to enquire about the old woman who had looked after Agnes (Oliver's mother), when she had died in the workhouse. Bumble told him that whereas that woman was also dead, there was still alive another old woman in the workhouse who was her friend. Monks asked Bumble to bring the old woman with him and meet him secretly the next day.

The old woman gave Monks a small bag. It contained two gold ornaments in which there were two pieces of hair and a plain gold ring with the word 'Agnes' inside it. This was meant to be given to Oliver. Bumble got twenty-five pounds for that secret service. Monks took this bag and threw it into a river.

II. Use the following words and phrases in your own sentences :
for nothing, piece, a few, alone, get away.

III. Read the sentence :

I want you to tell me something.

Fill in the blanks with words given below :

reach, sell, read, keep

1. I want you to _____ this book.
2. She wants me to _____ this ring.
3. He wanted me to _____ the office at 10 O'clock.
4. They want you to _____ silent.

IV. Answer the following questions.

1. Who was the stranger ?
2. What did Monks write on a piece of paper ?
3. Why did Bumble run after Monks ?
4. How long had the secret been kept ?
5. What did the small bag contain ?

17. NANCY LEARNS A SECRET

Fagin went to Bill to get Nancy's help to bring Oliver back. Bill asked for some money, as he had been ill for a long time. Nancy went with Fagin to his house. Monks came to meet Fagin as already planned. He promised him a lot of money if he could make an end of Oliver's life.

Nancy stood quietly near the door and heard all they had talked.

II. Who said these words and on what occasion ?

"I'll go and get you the money, Nancy. This is the key of a little box in which I keep a few things away from the bag, my dear. I never put my money away for I have none to put away, my dear—ha ! ha ! none to put away. It's a poor work... .."

III. Read the following sentences :

- (i) I could not help it.

(ii) He would have died but for the doctor.

Fill in the blanks with words and phrases given below :

- (i) lost, ill, weeping
- (ii) would have, advice, illness, have been, help.
1. He could not help _____ at the death of his mother.
2. I was _____ so I could not help lying on the ground.
3. She _____ her purse. She could not help crying.
4. I would have passed but for my _____.
5. He _____ been ruined but for his father's _____.
6. You would _____ in jail but for my timely _____.

IV. Answer the following questions :

1. Why was Bill angry with Fagin ?
2. What things did Fagin bring with him for Bill ?
3. Why did Nancy go with Fagin to his house ?
4. How did Nancy learn the secret ?

V. Translate the passage into Panjabi/Hindi.

"Well, you can go out now," said Sikes. "I need some money and you can go back with Fagin to his house and get it for me. I'll have a sleep while you're gone".

"I haven't any money," said Fagin.

"You've got lots at home," said Bill.

"Lots" cried Fagin, holding up his hands. "I haven't as much as would....."

18. A VISIT TO MISS MAYLIE

Nancy had learnt that they were planning to put Oliver to death. She had once pretended to be his sister. So she loved him inspite of her evil nature. She went to Miss Maylie in the hotel and told her all about the plot of Fagin and Monks. Miss Maylie offered her to stay with them, but she came back for the sake of Bill whom she loved and could not leave.

- II. Who said these words, on what occasion and to whom ?
 "I, lady !" replied the girl, "I am that terrible creature, that creature who lives among thieves. I have never known any better life from the first moment which I can remember".
- III. Sketch the character of Nancy with the help of the passage in Q. II.
- IV. Answer the following questions :
1. Why did Nancy not stay with Miss Rose ?
 2. What did Nancy want Miss Rose to do ?
 3. What secret did Nancy tell Miss Rose ?
 4. To whom was Rose to tell this story ?
 5. When did Nancy walk on London Bridge ?

V. Translate into Panjabi/Hindi.

"Stay another moment," said Rose, "Why must you return to those thieves when I can save you ? Will you not stay or at least take some money, so that you can lead an honest life in future ? I wish to help you."

"Not a penny," said Nancy, bursting into tears. "You could help me best if you could take my life at once. I am worth nothing. God bless you, sweet lady !"

19. OLD FRIENDS MEET

Mr Brownlow had been so kind to Oliver that he (Oliver) was very eager to meet him. Miss Rose, too, was eager to meet him and to tell the secret about Oliver. So they both went to see him.

Grimwig was also sitting with Mr Brownlow. He had a bad opinion about Oliver. But Miss Rose corrected his opinion. Miss Rose told the whole secret about Oliver to Mr Brownlow. So they both planned to meet Nancy on Sunday over the London Bridge as decided by Nancy with Rose.

II. Look at the following sentences :

- (i) Oliver asked Rose if they could see Mr Brownlow.
- (ii) He asked Gopal how his father was.
- (iii) The servant asked her to go away.

Change into indirect narration the following sentences :

1. I said to him, "Is your sister ill?"
2. He said to me, "How are you?"
3. They said to me, "Is it raining outside?"
4. You had said to her, "When is your friend leaving for England?"
5. The teacher said to the boys, "Read your lessons".

III. Answer the following questions :

1. Why did Rose want to meet Mr Brownlow?
2. Why did Oliver want to meet Mr Brownlow?
3. What did Grimwig say about Oliver?
4. What was the reply of Rose to what Grimwig said?
5. Why did they not tell the secret to Oliver?

IV. Use the following in sentences of your own :

up and down, honour, rose (as a verb), rose (as a noun), until.

20. A MIDNIGHT APPOINTMENT

It was Sunday night. The Church clock struck eleven. Nancy was preparing to meet Miss Rose over the London Bridge, as promised. But Sikes would not allow her to go unless she told him where she was going. So she could not go.

Fagin wanted to win over Nancy, but she knew him very well.

Next Sunday, Nancy went to meet Miss Rose, but Fagin set Charley Bates after her to see where she was going and what she was doing. Nancy told the secrets to Mr Brownlow. He decided to find out Monks first and then to put Fagin in prison.

II. Use in sentences of your own the following :

need not, turn away, trouble as noun, trouble as verb,
unless, until, neither-nor, as fast as, as soon as

III. Answer the following questions :

1. Why could Nancy not meet Miss Rose on the first Sunday, as promised ?
2. Why did Nancy not want Fagin to be taken by the Police ?
3. What did Nancy tell about Monks ?
4. Which four people were on London Bridge ?

IV. Look at the sentence :

Oliver asked if he could see Mr Brownlow.

This means : Oliver said, "Can I see Mr Brownlow ?"

Now write down the words of the speaker in each of the following sentences.

1. I asked her if she could sing well.
2. Mohan asked me if I could play cricket.
3. The teacher asked Gopal if his father was living in Chandigarh.
4. Oliver asked Miss Rose if she would take him to the country.
5. The mother asked the child if he liked the story.

21. NANCY IS MURDERED .

Charley Bates had known that Nancy had been meeting Miss Rose and Mr Brownlow and she had told them all about Fagin, Bill and others. Bates informed Fagin about it. Naturally, he was in a terrible anger. In the meantime, Bill came to Fagin's house with a box. Fagin told Bill the whole story. He came back home and murdered Nancy. She prayed for her life as she had been sparing him throughout. But he did not listen to her.

II. Use the following in sentences of your own :

from time to time, raised, to go mad, as if, break away, get up,
shot (as noun), shot (as verb), pour, more,

III. Who said these, on what occasion and to whom ?

"Let us both leave this terrible place and lead better lives far away from here. It is never too late to be sorry for the past and to start a new life."

IV. Answer the following questions :

1. Why was Fagin angry ? (three sentences)
2. What did Fagin tell Bill ? (three sentences)
3. What did Nancy tell Bill before he was going to kill her ? (three sentences)
4. What did Charley tell Bill ? (five sentences)
5. Why was Fagin so much afraid ?

V. Translate into Panjabi/Hindi.

Fagin sat with his eyes fixed on Sikes. "What's the matter ?" cried Sikes. "Why are you looking at me like that ?"

Fagin raised his hand, but he could not speak.

"Have you gone mad too ?" shouted Sikes.

"No, no, Bill," said Fagin. "It's not you. You're not the person I'm thinking about. But I have got something to tell you."

22. SIKES ESCAPES

Nancy's murder hangs heavy on Sikes. So he ran away from London along with the dog. He walked and walked through the fields and got tired. In the evening, he came to a village inn. There he met Harry who went round from village to village selling things like powder, soap, and knives.

To prove the usefulness of the powder, Harry tried to remove the mark of blood from Sikes's hat. Sikes got nervous, tore the hat away from Harry and rushed out of the inn.

Sikes walked on through the village. On the way, he heard the guard telling the postman of Nancy's murder. Sikes began to feel a terrible fear. Every object on the road seemed like a ghost to him. He imagined that Nancy was following him. He decided to walk back to London. He tried to drown his dog, but it ran away.

II. Fill in the blanks with words given below :

was, with, could, be, lay, to

1. He could not _____ properly advised.
2. The door _____ not be opened.
3. The floor _____ covered _____ blood.
4. Guru Nanak went from village _____ village.
5. The murdered woman _____ in the dark room.

III. Answer the following questions :

1. What steps did Sikes take to hide the murder ?
2. What was Harry selling ?
3. In what way was the powder useful ?
4. What news did the guard give ?
5. Why did Sikes try to drown the dog ?

23. MONKS IS CAUGHT

Mr Brownlow took Monks to his house. He told Monks the whole story of his (Monk's) father's love with Agnes and asked him to give Oliver—his half-brother—a part of the money his father had left him. Monks could not help agreeing. Mr Grimwig brought Bumble also at that moment. He too, had to tell the truth.

II. Use in sentences of your own the following phrases :

to do with, fall in love, to take care, agree to, agree with, for the present, need not.

III. Look at the following sentence :

How dare you enter my house !

Fill in the blanks with words given below :

treat, beat, leave, sit

1. How dare you _____ this boy.
2. How dare you _____ me like this !
3. I dare not _____ for the examination.
4. She dare not _____ the house.

IV. Answer the following questions :

1. What was Mr Brownlow to Monks ?
2. What was Monks real name ?
3. How was Oliver related to Monks ?
4. What did Mr Brownlow want Monks to do for Oliver ?
5. Why was not Bumble fit to be the master of the workhouse ?

V. Translate into Panjabi/Hindi.

"He came," said Mr Brownlow, "and he left with me, among some other things, a picture of this young girl whom he loved. He had painted the picture himself. He was planning to go away and he could not take it with him. He asked me to take care of it for him. He was going to take the young girl with him and go to another country. And then—he died."

24. THE DEATH OF SIKES

Sikes was sick of walking alone in the far-off fields. So he returned to London. He came back to an old house where Toby and Bates were hiding. The police who were in search of him also reached there. Sikes tied one end of a rope round the chimney and the other end round himself and jumped down the roof of the house. But the rope got round his neck. He fell from the roof, and swung against the wall—dead.

II. Give the positive degrees of :

poorest, lowest, dirtiest, tallest, hardest.

III. Answer the following questions :

1. What kind of houses were there on Jacob's island ?
2. Who were hiding in one of the old houses there ?
3. Why did Sikes throw Charley to the floor ?
4. Why did Sikes kill himself ?

IV. Make five different sentences using the word 'there'.

example: there were trees everywhere.

V. Translate into Panjabi/Hindi.

"What do you mean to do?" said Sikes, "Do you intend to sell me to the police or let me lie here till the hunt is over? Come. I want an answer."

"You may stop here if you think it's safe", said Crackit. There was another silence. Then Sikes spoke.

"Has.....it.....the body.....been put in the ground?" They shook their heads.

25. THE END OF THE STORY

Fagin was put in prison. He was to be hanged. Fagin saw death all around. He shouted like a mad man. He cried and tore his hair.

Mr Brownlow and Oliver went to see Fagin in the prison on the last day of his life. Fagin told Oliver about the papers Monks had given him. Fagin and Oliver prayed together. Oliver nearly fainted after the visit to the prison.

After Fagin's death, Bates began a new and happy life on a farm. Monks went to America, wasted all his money there and died in prison. Mr Brownlow took Oliver as his son and he lived near his friends. They were all happy enjoying one another's company and thanking God for His blessings and mercy.

II. Answer the following questions :

1. What did Fagin think of when he was sitting alone in the prison?
2. What business did Mr Brownlow have with Fagin?
3. What reply did Fagin give to Mr Brownlow and to Oliver about the papers?
4. What did Fagin talk to Oliver?

III. Use the following in sentences of your own :

after a while, because of, laugh at, at last, to do with forgive, so that